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THE
PATHWAY
OF
PROMISE











THE
PATHWAY OF PROMISE.

1

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“ Nor deem, who to high bliss aspire,
Must win their way through blood and fire.
The writhings of a wounded heart
Are fiercer than a foeman's dart.
Oft in life's stillest shade reclining,
In desolation unrepining,
Without a hope on earth to find
A mirror in an answering mind,
Meek souls there are, who little dream
Their *daily* strife an angel's theme,
Or that the rod they take so calm
Shall prove in heaven a martyr's palm.”

KEBLE.

THE PATHWAY
OF
PROMISE:

OR,
WORDS OF COMFORT TO THE
CHRISTIAN PILGRIM.

J. G. M.

SECOND EDITION.

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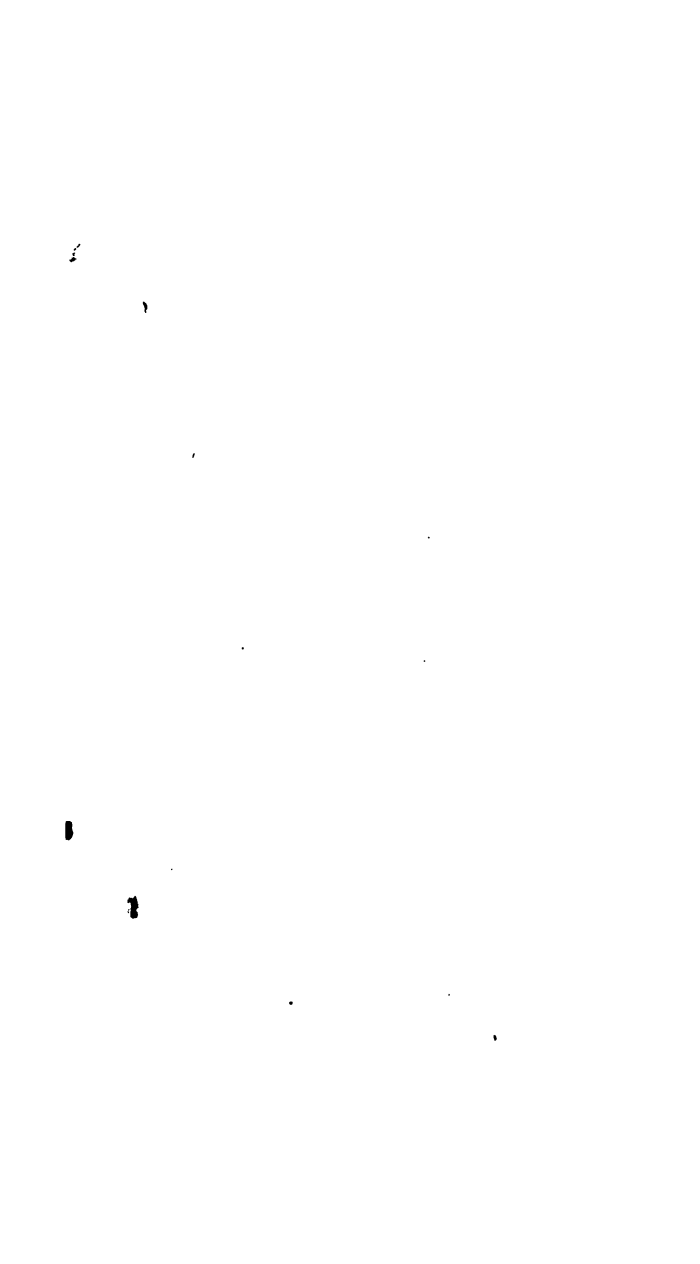


It is the purpose of this volume to set before the believer some of the gracious promises of God's Word, and to suggest some thoughts which may prove consolatory and encouraging to the Christian pilgrim, as he journeys onward to his heavenly home.

May the Divine blessing attend an earnest and humble effort to minister comfort to the downcast, strength to the weak, and courage to those who have set their faces Zionward!

J. A. M.





P R A Y E R.

“ Give me, O Lord, an earnest heart,
Anxious to do Thy will,
Contented with whatever part
In life 'tis mine to fill :
Fearful of wrath and worldly pride ;
Glad, if a low degree,
With even sorrow by my side,
Help me to walk with Thee.
Cautious of all the gauds and glow
By earthly sunshine given,
Choosing the cloudiest paths below,
So they lead up to heaven.”

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
PREPARATION FOR THE JOURNEY, .	1
PROMISED BLESSINGS, . . .	9
THE BOW IN THE CLOUD, . . .	17
DUTY AND INTEREST, . . .	25
GUARDIANSHIP,	33
JEHOVAH,	43
CONTENTMENT,	53
DILIGENCE,	61
DAILY STRENGTH,	71
PROGRESS,	83
ASSURANCE,	93
CAREFULNESS,	105
ABIDING WITH GOD,	117
GRATITUDE,	129
PRAYER,	139
DIVINE TEACHING,	151
FIDELITY,	161
GOD'S PRESENCE,	177
REST,	185

Preparation for the Journey.

PSALM lxxxiv. 11.

"The Lord God is a sun and shield : the Lord will give grace and glory : no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."

ECCL. viii. 12.

"Surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him."

ISA. iii. 10.

"Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him."

PROV. xxi. 21.

"He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life, righteousness, and honour."

PSALM xxiii. 6.

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life."

PHILIP. iv. 19.

"My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

" O Lord ! how happy should we be,
If we could cast our care on Thee ;
If we from self could rest,
And feel at heart that One above,
In perfect wisdom, perfect love,—
Is working for the best.

" How far from this our daily life !
Ever disturbed by anxious strife,
By sudden, wild alarms ;
Oh, could we but relinquish all
Our earthly props, and simply fall
On Thy almighty arms !

" Could we but kneel, and cast our load,
E'en while we pray, upon our God ;
Then rise with lighten'd cheer
Sure that the Father, who is nigh
To still the famish'd raven's cry,
Will hear, in that we fear.

" We cannot trust Him as we should,
So chafes fallen nature's restless mood
To cast its peace away ;
Yet birds and flow'rets round us preach,—
All, all the present evil teach,
Sufficient for the day.

" Lord, make these faithless hearts of ours
Such lessons learn from birds and flowers,
Make them from self to cease.
Leave all things to a Father's will,
And taste, before Him lying still,
E'en in affliction, peace."

—*Child's Christian Year.*

GEN. xxviii. 20, 21.

"And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God *will be with me*, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, *then* shall the Lord be my God."



WHEN he uttered these words, the patriarch was a solitary, friendless exile. He had left his father's home,—his heart big with sorrow, and his eyes suffused with tears. The path of life, all dark and uncertain, lay before him, and the close of his first day's journey found him weary and benighted, with no better accommodation than the cold earth for his bed, and a stone for his pillow. More than 400 miles of wild and inhospitable deserts were to be traversed, and he was quite uncertain what reception he might meet with at Haran. *Most* wisely, therefore, did he resolve to enter into covenant with God, and supplicate the Divine protection and blessing at the outset of his journey. His desires were moderate.

4 *PREPARATION for the JOURNEY.*

his wishes few,—“to be kept in the way,”—“to have bread to eat and raiment to put on,”—these were the requests he humbly preferred when erecting the remembrance-stone at Bethel.

What a suitable preparation for his journey! Reader, have *you* thus besought the Divine blessing?—have *you* thus covenanted with God, and dedicated yourself to Him? You have entered on *your* pilgrimage,—an unknown path lies before you; are you still a traveller through the desert of the world without a Guide?—journeying you know not whither, with no Friend to “keep you in the way”—no “covenant” blessings, which alone are worth possessing. Oh, think how it fared with Jacob. *He* trusted God. He entered on a long and painful course of discipline,—dark clouds gathered round him,—the storm and tempest beat,—he passed through *years* of mingled joy and sorrow,—he could sing of “mercy and of judgment,”—was he disappointed in the end? Listen to his language, when, once more returning, with joy and gladness, to his native plains, and pitching his tent in security and peace,—“O God of my father Abraham, and God of

PREPARATION for the JOURNEY. 5

my father Isaac, the Lord which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee ; I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which Thou hast shewed unto Thy servant ; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands." From the days of his youth he had been an exile from his father's house,—his best years had been spent in a strange land, amid toil and hardship. But we find him now, at the end of twenty years, once more within sight of his native land. "There, by his side, rolls the river, once so familiar to his eye,—there lie the plains and the hills, over which, when a boy, he had so often roamed, and what is his testimony ? Dwells he on the years of bitterness and toil that have rolled over him, since last he climbed these hills, and wandered by this stream ?" Have the terms of the Bethel covenant remained unfulfilled ? and, does he think with regret upon his chequered pathway ? Ah, no ; not a word of complaining is heard ; not a feeling of dissatisfaction finds place in his soul ;—the faithfulness, the care, the love of his covenant God,—the blessings strewed so

6 PREPARATION for the JOURNEY.

profusely on his pathway,—are all he can now think of. He speaks of nothing else. “With my staff,” he says, “a poor, friendless, destitute wanderer, I left my paternal home. Well do I remember this flowing stream. Well do I recollect the time when last I crossed it, my staff my only support, and almost my only property. But *now*, how altered are my circumstances,—oh! the unerring faithfulness,—the amazing goodness and mercy of my God!—‘I am become two bands;’ I have flocks and herds, men-servants and women-servants; the outcast has become a prince! God’s promise is fulfilled. He has blessed me, and therefore I am rich. He has kept me by the way, and therefore I have prospered.” “I am with thee,” was the Bethel promise, “and will bring thee again into this land.” Truth has accomplished what mercy covenanted.

Reader! God’s servants have *ever* found Him faithful to His word. “He cannot deny Himself.” The covenant has never been broken on *His* part. However chequered may have been their history, like Jacob, they have at length had reason to declare, “I have never been forsaken,—the Lord has never left

PREPARATION for the JOURNEY. 7

me." And why? He is *ever* the same. Has He said, He will never leave His people nor forsake them? the word He has spoken must be fulfilled. "Heaven and earth may pass away, but not one jot or tittle which He hath spoken shall pass until all be fulfilled." Enter, then, into covenant with God. Take *Him* as your Guide "by the way," and you too will one day be able to say, "He promised to keep me, and He *has* kept me. He said, He would strengthen me in the hour of trial, and, He *has* strengthened me. He said, He would be a present help in trouble, and, in trouble He *has* been my help. He told me, if I would acknowledge Him in all my ways, He would direct my paths, and, He *has* directed them. He said, He would be my refuge in storms, and, when storms have assailed me, He *has* been my refuge. Though heart and flesh should faint and fail me, the Lord will be the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."

Reader! let this be your prayer: "O God, the Strength of the needy, the Helper of all them that flee to Thee for succour, vouchsafe to be my Guide in life. Pour upon me the

8 PREPARATION for the JOURNEY.

riches of Thy grace, and so sanctify and bless me, that I may serve Thee henceforth in body and soul, and live in Thy holy love and fea unto my life's end."

" Our night may be a starless night,
Our *path* a tangled maze
But yet, our eyes shall soon behold
The morning's golden blaze
Keeping our gaze upon the East,
Leaving the night behind,
With the *will* to find the light *increased*
And strengthen'd in our mind ;
The sun shall rise, the gloom depart,
Lost in the strength of day,
For earnest love and trustful heart
Are sure to find a way."

Promised Blessings.

DEUT. vii. 9.

"Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him, and keep his commandments to a thousand generations."

NUMB. xxiii. 19.

"God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?"

JOSH. xxiii. 14.

"And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts, and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof."

PSALM xviii. 30.


"As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the Lord is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him."

PSALM cxix. 89, 90.

"For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven. Thy faithfulness is unto all generations: thou hast established the earth, and it abideth."

HEB. x. 23.

"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised.)"



- " Stand up !—Thou art as true a man
 As moves the human mass among ;
 As much a part of the great plan,
 That, with creation's dawn began,
 As any of the throng.
- " If true unto thyself thou wast,
 What were the proud one's scorn to thee ?
 A feather, which thou mightest cast
 Aside, as idly as the blast
 The light leaf from the tree.
- " No ! uncurb'd passions, low desires,
 Absence of noble self-respect,
 Death in the breast's consuming fires,
 To that high nature which aspires
 For ever, till thus check'd.
- " These are thine enemies,—thy worst.
 They chain thee to thy lowly lot,
 Thy labour, and thy life accurst !
 Oh, stand erect, and from them burst ;
 And longer suffer not !
- " Thou art thyself thine enemy !
 The great,—what better they than thou ?
 As theirs, is not thy will as free ?
 Has God with equal favours thee
 Neglected to endow ?
- " True ! wealth thou hast not,—'tis but dust ;
 Nor place—uncertain as the wind !
 But that thou hast, which, with thy crust
 And water, may despise the lust
 Of both,—a noble mind.
- " With this, and passions under ban,
 True faith, and holy trust in God,
 Thou art the peer of any man ;
 Look up, then, that thy little span
 Of life may be well trod."

W. D. GALLAGHER.

GEN. viii. 22.

“While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease.”



ENTURIES have elapsed since this promise was given, and to many it now appears as an idle word. The bright and beautiful opening blossoms of spring,—the rich glow of summer verdure,—the profusion and bounty of harvest,—the frost and cold of winter,—are regarded merely as matters of course,—inspiring neither hope nor fear,—awakening no emotion of gratitude or consolation in the soul. Not so was it, at the time when they were first uttered. Then, the whole earth had just been swept by the devouring deluge,—then everything seemed unfixed and uncertain,—the fountains of the great deep had been broken up,—the sea, once confined within its boundaries, had rolled in upon the land,—the windows of heaven had been opened, and the waters that are above the

firmament swelled those that were below. Each gathering cloud might mantle the world in final ruin. Each falling drop might open the sluices of another deluge. All was uncertainty. What had happened yesterday might occur again,—the hills and valleys might once more be submerged,—the mighty deep might again burst its accustomed limits, and the whole earth become a desolation and a wreck. Where was the security to Noah and his sons? Who could assure them that the scarcely-subsided sea would not again devastate the land, and pour its rushing torrents over the face of nature? Even that God who made heaven and earth,—who guides and governs all things according to His will and pleasure.

And so it was. He gave back to the earth the blessing which had been removed from it for a time, and restored the feeling of peace and safety to the little remnant that was still left. And ever since, the seasons have returned in their order,—the sun has gone forth on his mighty journey,—the earth has been refreshed by the gentle showers of heaven,—and the husbandman has gathered in the rich treasures of harvest.

What a proof of the *faithfulness* of God ! He remembers His promise, and, mindful ever of His grace and truth, "He gives us all things richly to enjoy." In every returning harvest, in every passing year, He has been saying to the children of men, "My covenant will I *not* break, nor alter the thing that has gone out of My lips."

What a proof of the *infinite power* of God ! Man may alter the surface of the earth, he may sow and plant and reap, but all his genius and science cannot clothe the field with golden corn, or fashion one leaf of the forest tree. The power of creation God has retained ; it is sacred and incommunicable ; and His glory will He not give to another.

What a proof of the *goodness* of God ! Men have despised and defied Him, they have sought to banish Him from His own creation ; yet, still He has showered down His blessings. He has given them "rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness." Wherever, on the wide surface of the world, there is the cry of want, or the utterance of necessity, there is a hidden yet intelligible voice that points to the supply. Man requires sustenance ;

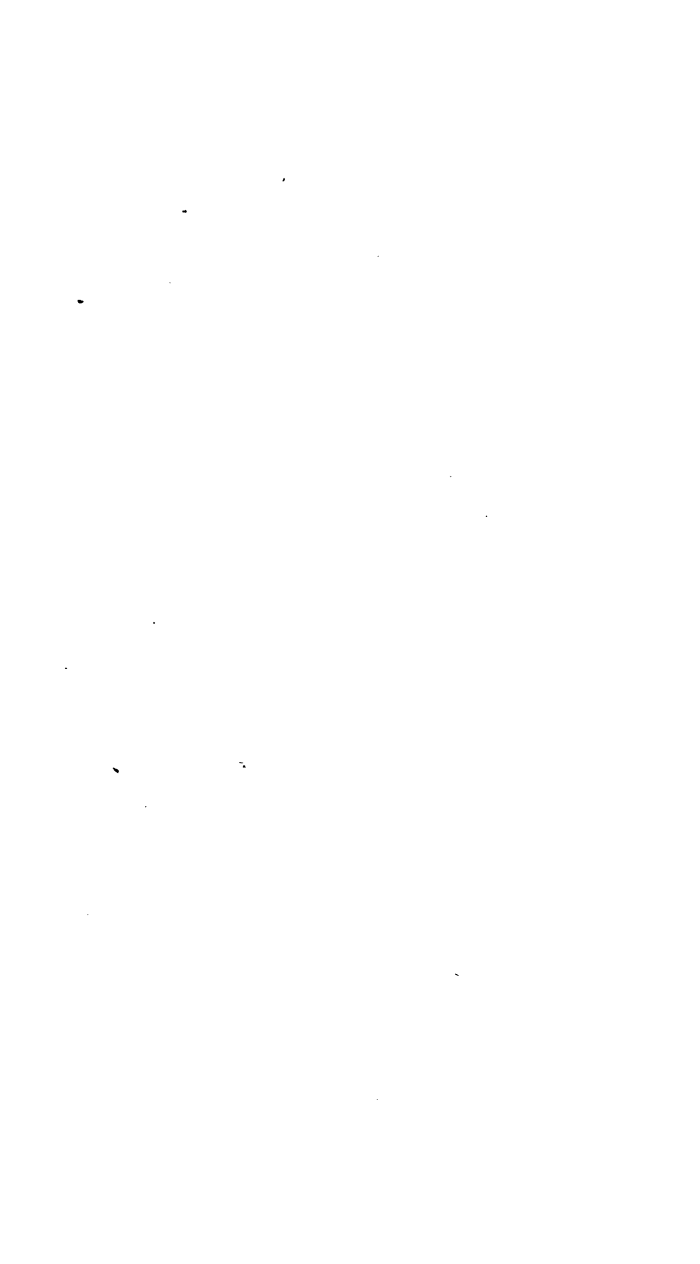
and the earth springs with teeming produce, and spreads its wide and unremitting supply of manna for his maintenance ! Man asks for bread ; and the dews have furnished their ministry, and the sower has gone forth and sown, and the genial rains have descended, and the sun, that mighty, vegetative principle, has poured his light and warmth ! A working has been going on, still and unseen, but certain in its result. The seed cast into the ground has not lain dormant : first, has appeared the blade, then, the ear, then, the full corn in the ear, and then, waving with myriad golden spears, the hosts of the harvest have awaited the rejoicing husbandman ; and the wants of man have been supplied. Reader, see you not in all this, the incessant illustration of the *goodness* of God,—a confirmation of the truth, that, “ though the mountains may depart, and the hills be removed, yet His kindness shall not depart, neither shall the covenant of His peace be removed ? ”

Four thousand years have well-nigh elapsed since God thus spake to Noah. Generations on generations have all passed away, and yet, it is as true now as then, that “ God hath appointed the moon for seasons, and

the sun knoweth his going down." Christian, see, in the return of harvest, and the succession of seasons, an evidence of the faithfulness, the power, and the goodness of *your* covenant God.

"Father of mercies, from whom cometh down every good and every perfect gift, and who keepest covenant unto all generations, impress me with a sense of Thy faithfulness, of Thy power, and of Thine unmerited goodness ; and enable me to shew my gratitude, by a sober, faithful, and charitable use of all Thy mercies, to the good of my brethren, and the glory of Thy blessed name."

" Since Thou, the everlasting God,
 My Father art become,
 Jesus, my Guardian and my Friend,
 And heaven my final home ;
 I welcome all Thy sovereign will,
 For all that will is love,
 And, when I know not what Thou dost,
 I wait the light above.
 Thy *covenant*, in the darkest gloom,
 Shall heavenly rays impart,
 Which, when my eyelids close in death,
 Shall warm my chilling heart."



The Bow in the Cloud.

ROM. vi. 9, 18.

"Knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more ; death hath no more dominion over him. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."

ROM. viii. 33, 34.

"Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

ISA. xliii. 25.

"I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins."

HEB. x. 17.

"And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

JER. xxxi. 34.

"And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord : for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord : for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

PSALM xli. 1, 2, 3.

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble : therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea ; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof."

" In heavenly love abiding,
No change my heart shall fear ;
And safe is such confiding,
For nothing changes here.
The storm may roar without me,
My heart may low be laid,
But God is round about me,
And can I be dismay'd ?

" Wherever He may guide me,
No want shall turn me back ;
My Shepherd is beside me,
And nothing can I lack.
His wisdom ever waketh,
His sight is never dim ;
He knows the way He taketh,
And I will walk with Him.

" Green pastures are before me,
Which yet I have not seen ;
Bright skies will soon be o'er me,
Where the dark clouds have been.
My hope I cannot measure,
My faith to life is free ;
My Saviour has my treasure,
And He will walk with me."

A

—*Hymns and Meditations.*

GEN. ix. 16.

"And the bow shall be in the cloud, and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth."

NATURE again smiles, and emerges from beneath her watery covering. The promise of Him who cannot lie is given, that a second flood shall no more destroy the earth. And what is to be the sign,—the enduring remembrance-token? "I do set My bow in the cloud." There it had been, perhaps, before, encircling the heavens with its belt of golden hues, but now, it was destined to awaken new thoughts, and to inspire grateful emotions in the heart of man,—now, it was to testify of God's promise,—to be a lasting memorial of His covenant through all generations. Often, as the stormy cloud should gather in the heavens, threatening to pour its pent-up waters on a sinful world, when the "bow" appeared, it was to be as the voice of God declaring, "the

20 THE BOW IN THE CLOUD.

waters shall no more destroy all flesh." Nay, in condescension to human weakness, the Almighty was henceforth to regard it, as a remembrancer to Himself, of His gracious promise, "I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant."

"The bow in the cloud" was a pledge of *temporal* blessings,—to the believer, it is also a striking type of *spiritual*. Is there no bow of promise which gilds another sky,—which tells, of wrath averted, of security insured? Yes; Jesus is the "Bow in the cloud" of Heaven's wrath, assuring the believer, that a fiercer storm, *than any that ever devastated the world*, has passed away. When, to the eye of faith, He appears in the spiritual firmament, every fear is dispelled,—God "will not return to destroy;" and, as the rainbow appears with blended colours, all melting into each other with the most perfect harmony; so, in Christ, justice and mercy, holiness and love, power and goodness, all combine to form *one* glorious and resplendent arch.

The rainbow tells of the *perpetuity* of the covenant. Four thousand years have passed, and, still it spans the heavens. Christian! see you not in this, an emblem of the *immu-*

THE BOW IN THE CLOUD. 21

tability of your God, in redemption? He Himself regards it as such : " Thus saith the Lord, If you can break My covenant of the day, and My covenant of the night, and, that there should not be day and night in their season, then may also My covenant be broken with David My servant"—that is, with Christ and His people, of whom David was the type. Thus, the God of nature, is alike *unchangeable*, as a God of grace.

The rainbow is a token of God's covenant with His people. " For this," says He, " is as the waters of Noah unto Me ; for, as I have sworn, that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so have I sworn, that I would not be wroth with thee nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but My kindness shall not depart from thee ; neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee." Here, and here alone, is the *security* of the Christian, the unalterable purpose of a covenant God.

He has given *them* also a " Bow in the cloud," to which, in every season of impending danger, they may direct the eye of faith.

Reader! is yours a dark and cheerless

22 THE BOW IN THE CLOUD.

day? Is your horizon obscured by threatening clouds? Remember, there is the "Bow in the cloud," the token of the *unalterable* covenant of God. Like the mariner, in a stormy sea, you may be appalled at the indications of a coming tempest, you may be listening with alarm, to the roar of the angry waves and the hoarse howling of the wind. Lift up the eye of faith,—see, yonder opening in the clouds,—yonder faint ray of light,—yonder splendid "Bow in the cloud." It is to you the covenant-token that relief is at hand, for "the Lord will look upon it." It is His own promise. *Your* sorrowing eye, and the eye of your Father in heaven, will meet in *one* spot,—on Jesus Christ,—and then, as the Lord remembers His covenant, and thinks upon you for good, you will be enabled to "trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon your God." Yea, the darker the cloud, the more brilliant will be the reflection,—the heavier the trial, the sweeter the promise; for, amid God's most mysterious dealings, you may discover marks of His power, His love, and His faithfulness.

There are views of Christ, which can only be obtained, beneath a cloudy sky, and amidst

THE BOW IN THE CLOUD. 23

many showers of tears. Believer, strive, when the darkness begins to gather round you, to look *upwards*, and *soon*, reviving faith will discover the "Bow of promise;" the storm will be hushed,—the lowering, portentous clouds will roll away, and you will take up the language of the psalmist,—“Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the *heavens*, and Thy faithfulness reacheth unto the *clouds*.”

Think, too, of that glorious day, when there shall be a serene and cloudless sky,—a sky, which can no more become darkened and obscured,—when you will not need this *emblem*, for you will have the *reality* of God's faithfulness and love.

Here, you have no bow without a cloud, but then shall rise that glorious Sun which shall never set, whose radiant beams shall no more be broken by misty shadows. Soon, believer, throughout eternity's calm brightness, you will gaze upon the Bow of your Redeemer's glory; and, as you gaze, you will shine, even as He shines. For “we shall be like Him, when we shall see Him as He is.”

“O God of all grace and mercy, who art

24 *THE BOW IN THE CLOUD.*

able to supply every loss, to heal every wound, to dry up every tear, and to dispel every cloud: Grant, that when my sorrows abound, my consolations may much more abound. May I be still and know that Thou art God, acknowledging Thy right to do with me as Thou wilt, and confiding in the wisdom and goodness of Thy dispensations."

"The sun's bright rays are hidden,
The rains in floods descend ;
The winds with angry murmurs
The stoutest branches bend.
A gloom, the face of nature,
As with a pall doth shroud ;
Its influence all are feeling,
But,—look beyond the cloud !

"For, lo ! at length appeareth
A little streak of light,
Increasing every moment
Till all again is bright.
So, however dark our prospects,
Howe'er by grief we're bow'd,
It will not last for ever,—
We'll look beyond the cloud !"

Duty and Interest.

Ex. xxiii. 25.

"And ye shall serve the Lord your God, and he shall bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee."

PSALM xxxvii. 16.

"A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked."

PROV. x. 22.

"The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it."

PROV. xv. 16.

"Better is little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure and trouble therewith."

ECCL. iii. 13.

"And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God."

“ Since 'tis Thy sentence I should part
With the most precious treasure of my heart,
I freely that and more resign ;
My heart itself, as its delight, is Thine.
My little all I give to Thee :
Thou gav'st a greater gift, Thy Son, to me.

“ Take all, great God ! I will not grieve ;
But still will wish that I had still to give.
I hear Thy voice ; Thou bidd'st me quit
My paradise ; I bless, and do submit :
I will not murmur at Thy word,
Nor beg Thy angel to sheath up his sword.”

KEBLE.

"And Amaziah said to the man of God, But what shall we do for the hundred talents which I have given to the army of Israel? And the man of God answered, The Lord is able to give thee much more than this."

AMAZIAH, King of Judah, had sinfully leagued himself with idolaters. From principles of worldly policy, he had formed an alliance with the kingdom of Israel, then at enmity with God. The prophet of the Lord was thereupon commissioned to warn him of the consequences, in these words,—“O king, let not the army of Israel go with thee; for the Lord is not with Israel.” Still, he was left free to act as he pleased. “If thou *wilt* go, do it, be strong for the battle; God shall make thee fall before the enemy: for God hath power to help, and to cast down.” The king hesitated. He had given, out of his treasury, an hundred talents for the promised help; and *now*, he would receive no equivalent. No assurance even, is granted by

the prophet, that the loss should be repaired. He is simply told, that the silver and the gold are *God's*, to give or to withhold,—“The Lord is *able* to give thee much more than this.” Amaziah, at length yields to the voice of warning. He separates himself from the army that came out of Ephraim, and obtains a signal victory in the Valley of Salt.

Reader, this narrative is most instructive. We have only given the outline. Read it in your Bible, prayerfully. You may discover points of striking resemblance between the case of Amaziah and your own; and, at some period, *you* may remember having asked the same question, “What shall I do for the hundred talents?” The claims of the world often conflict with those of religion, and a struggle ensues. Duty says, “Do this;” inclination, self-interest, worldly policy demand, “But what shall I have in return for the sacrifice?” See, the man who has been induced by the Spirit of God to yield himself to the service of Christ, has *he* no sacrifices? Must he not surrender old habits, desires, and companions,—habits, which had become engrained in his nature, and friends, in whose society he once took delight. Yes; there

are sacrifices. He must exchange the smile of the world for its withering frown ; he must abstain from pleasures, once congenial to his taste,—pursuits, which promised high advancement, and objects, on which his every desire was fixed. And *this* he must do, trusting simply to the assurance,—“The Lord is *able* to give thee more than this.” Unbelief may whisper, “*But* is He also *willing* ?” Experience *might* afford convincing proof that He is ; but, such doubts are unworthy of being entertained for a moment. God *must* be *trusted*. He asks for a childlike confidence. He says, as of old to Amaziah, “If thou wilt go, do it.” If you are resolved to continue the unholy alliance with the enemies of God, then, hold to these pleasures of the world, retain your love for old habits and pursuits ; but, remember the fatal consequences. Reader, know you aught of this feeling,—this conflict between duty and *seeming* interest ? You listen to the Sabbath bell, as it rings out a loving invitation to the house of God. Do *you* ever feel the risings of a wish to absent yourself on some trivial pretext ?—the state of the weather, the visit of a neighbour, or the few miles of distance.

Ah ! it is the old Amaziah doubt, "What shall I have for the sacrifice?" You have a family altar. The sacred hour of devotion comes round ; business, pleasure, urge *their* demands,—there is a hesitation, a struggle between duty and worldly interest, and the question returns, "What shall I have for the sacrifice of time?"

A poor sufferer lives in your neighbourhood ; he has few to speak the word of comfort,—few to read to him the promises of God,—*duty* bids you visit his solitary chamber, and bear glad tidings to the tried, afflicted one ; but your worldly affairs press hard upon you, and again you ask, "What shall I have for the loss I may sustain?"

Christian ! *trust* God ; and be assured, that whatever labour you may undergo,—whatever sacrifices you may make,—"the Lord is able to give you much more than this." Does God require the performance of any duty ? Then, let it be done at whatever cost, for there your *true* interest lies. Duty called Moses to relinquish his high position in Pharaoh's household,—his *apparent* interest lay in keeping it ; but, he looked onward to the future,—he took the balances in his

hand, and fairly weighed, what he must now forgo, against what he should hereafter receive,—what he must now endure, against what he should hereafter enjoy,—and, eventually he secured his *true* interest.

Reader! follow his example, and his reward shall be yours. Be assured, you cannot be a loser, by resolving, at all hazards, not to lose the favour and the friendship of God. He can give you all you need, for, “all things are His.” Ay, and if you act thus, He will give you peace and comfort, hope and joy, here,—and glory, honour, and immortality hereafter.

“Grant, O Lord, unto Thy servant, the spirit to think and to do always such things as be rightful. Give me grace to trust Thee, and to feel assured, that the path of duty is the path of true and lasting happiness. Teach me Thy will, and incline my heart unto Thy testimonies, that in all my works begun, continued, or ended in Thee, I may glorify Thy name, and, finally, by Thy mercy, obtain everlasting life through Jesus Christ my Lord.”

"Is this the way, my Father?—'Tis, my child.
Thou must pass through the tangled, dreary wild,
If thou wouldst reach the city undefiled,—
Thy peaceful home above.

"But enemies are round?—Yes, child, I know
That where thou least expect'st thou'lt find a foe,
But, victor thou shalt prove o'er all below,—
Only, seek strength above.

"My Father, it is dark.—Child, take my hand;
Cling close to me,—I'll lead thee through the land;
Trust my all-seeing care,—so shalt thou stand
Midst glory bright above.

"My footsteps seem to slide.—Child, only raise
Thine eye to me, then in these slippery ways,
I will hold up thy goings; thou shalt praise
Me for each step above.

"O Father, I'm weary!—Child, lean thy head
Upon my breast; it was my love that spread
Thy rugged path; hope on still, till I have said,
'Rest,—rest for aye above.'"

J. B. M.

Guardianship.

DEUT. xxxiii. 12.

"And of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him ; and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders."

PROV. xviii. 10.

"The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe."

1 PET. iii. 13.

"And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?"

PROV. iii. 24.

"When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid ; yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet."

PS. cxxiv. 8.

"Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth."

ISA. xliii. 2.

"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee ; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee : when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt ; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee."

"Lead, Saviour, lead, amid the encircling gloom,
 Lead Thou me on.
The night is dark, and I am far from home,
 Lead Thou me on.
Keep Thou my feet ; I do not ask to see
The distant scene,—one step enough for me.

"I was not ever thus, nor pray'd that Thou
 Shouldst lead me on ;
I loved to choose and see my path, but now
 Lead Thou me on.
I loved the glare of day, and, spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will ;—remember not past years.

"So long Thy power hath bless'd me,—sure it still
 Will lead me on
O'er vale and hill, through stream and torrent, till
 The night is gone ;
And with the morn, those angel-faces smile,
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile."

DEUT. xxxii. 10.

"He *found* him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he *led* him about, he *instructed* him, he *kept* him as the apple of his eye."



THUS Moses describes God's care of ancient Israel. How accurate the description! In the land of Egypt, —groaning under oppressive slavery, and writhing under the lash of heartless taskmasters,—God *found* His chosen people. And, when His eye of love was fixed upon them, He "led them about," from the Red Sea shore to the Promised Land,—sometimes along a straight, sometimes a circuitous path, —and, all the while "He instructed them" by many a providential dealing, and many a token of loving-kindness. He instructed them by mercies, —by warnings, and by judgments,—by frequent interpositions of His power,—and, by signal proof, of His determination to bless the obedient, and to punish the transgressor. Yea, "He kept them as the apple of His eye,"—He shielded them in

the hour of peril,—He manifested Himself strong in their behalf,—He placed around them the broad shield of omnipotence, until at length, He brought them to the goodly land, promised to their fathers.

Christian ! see the emblem of thyself in Israel. Where did God find *thee*? He found thee in “a desert land.” Yes, earth with all its loveliness and beauty, is a desert place, until the sinner has been found by God. There is much, it is true, to attract the eye and to gratify the sense, but fair and lovely though it be, in a moral and spiritual view it is “a desert land.” The soul can find in it no sustenance,—no refuge ; and, as in a “waste howling wilderness,” it is surrounded, on every side, by dangers, and exposed to countless perils. But, oh ! it is a blessed thing to know, that God seeks out, and finds the wanderer, in the desert ; and, when He has found Him, “He leads him about,” ~~not~~ always by a direct path, to the promised land, but by a circuitous route, and in the right way, to “the city of habitation.”

Reader ! has God permitted *thee* to encounter the sharp stroke of affliction? Has He taken from *thee* the earthly prop, upon

which thou wert wont to lean all too fondly? Remember! God is leading thee *about*. These unexpected trials,—these heartrending bereavements,—are just so many turnings in thy pilgrimage. No thorn has been scattered on *thy* path, but what is common to the one family of God. “This honour have all the saints.” The Shepherd is leading thee, as all the flock are led, with a skilful hand, and in the right way. It is thine to *stand*, if He bids thee, or to follow, if He leads.

And, oh, Christian! is it not well, thou knowest not the path, along which God is leading thee? How disheartened would Israel have been, had they known the long and weary pilgrimage which was before them,—the want, and suffering, and privation of their forty years’ travel! Even so would it be with thee, couldst thou look into the dark and mysterious future, and see the rough and stony places in life’s path,—the thorns and briars in the hills of difficulty!—couldst thou mark, how often and how painfully, thou wast to be wounded and stricken,—couldst thou gaze on those grassy mounds, which will yet cover the ashes of the loved and cherished, and behold thyself, at the close of life’s journey, it

may be, a worn and weary pilgrim, tottering on the verge of the grave, feeble and exhausted, with the perils thou hast encountered. Oh ! it is better far, to leave all to God,—

“ Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan His work in vain ;
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain.”

Although, in leading His people, “God giveth no account of any of His matters,” yet, if we put ourselves confidingly into His hands, the longer He leads us, the more we shall be inclined to trust Him. It is even thus He “instructs us,”—instructs us in His love, and faithfulness, and goodness ; He instructs us in our own weakness and His all-sufficiency,—our own impotence and His omnipotence,—our corruption and His grace,—our own frailty and His constancy,—our unbelief and His unwavering faithfulness to His word. And, mark the believer’s security, “He keeps him as the apple of His eye.” Such is God’s watchful guardianship over His saints,—such His unceasing vigilance, Yes, humble, unknown, obscure believer. dwelling in a lowly cottage, in some seques-

tered glen, far removed from the hum of human voice or occupation, if only thou canst say of God, that He is thy reconciled Father in Christ, thou art more to be envied than princes of the earth, for thou art in possession of a blessedness, such as no monarch can bestow, no wealth can purchase, no earthly power procure. Be sure that God, even thy God, does not, for a solitary instant, forget or overlook thee ; thy most trivial actions are not without interest in His sight,—not a hair falleth to the ground without thy Father ; He orders all things, for the sake of His own great name, and for the discipline of thy soul, to prepare thee for the glories and the blessings of eternity.

Christian ! God has *found* thee,—God is *leading* thee,—God is *instructing* thee,—oh, then, leave to Him to choose thy path in life ! Rest, calmly and unhesitatingly, upon the sure word, “*kept* by the mighty power of God,” and, the nearer you come to the land of your inheritance, the stronger will grow the conviction, that God is faithful to all His promises. As He carries you, securely, over the rough and stony places of life’s journey, you will sing of “mercy and of judgment ;” and

when descending the brink of the dark waters of Jordan, which divide Canaan from the wilderness, you will take up the language of the Psalmist, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me, Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me."

And oh ! thrice-animating prospect ! As you stand upon the cloudless summits of the heavenly Zion, welcomed by angelic bands, greeted with the loud hosannas of the redeemed, methinks, *this* will prove the burden of your song, "He found *me* in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness ; He led *me* about, He instructed *me*, He kept *me* as the apple of His eye."

"O God ! who hast sent Thine own Son into the world to seek and save the lost, and who hast prepared for them that love Thee, such good things as pass man's understanding, pour into my heart such love towards Thee, that, loving Thee above all things, I may obtain Thy promises of guidance and strength

in this world, and of joy and happiness at
Thy right hand in the world to come."

"Oh ! for that bright and happy land
Where, far amid the blest,
'The wicked cease from troubling, and
The weary are at rest.'

"Where friends are never parted,
Once met around Thy throne ;
And none are broken-hearted,
Since all, with Thee, are one !

"Yet oh ! till then, watch o'er us keep,
While far from Thee away ;
And soothe us, Lord, oft as we weep,
And hear us when we pray."

J. S. MONSELL.

Jehovah.

ECCL. viii. 12.

"Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him."

Ps. lx. 4.

"Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth."

Ps. xx. 5.

"We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners: the Lord fulfil all thy petitions."

JOHN xiv. 27.

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

ROM. v. 1.

"Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Ps. cxxix. 7.

"Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?"

GEN. xxviii. 17.

"And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

ISA. xlv. 24.

"Surely, shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed."

2 COR. v. 21.

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

"He on the rock may bid us stand, and see
The outskirts of His march of mystery,
His endless warfare with man's wilful heart ;
First, His great power He to the sinner shows,
Lo ! at His angry blast the rocks unclose,
And to their base the trembling mountains part :

"Yet the Lord is not here : 'tis not by power
He will be known—but darker tempests lower ;
Still, sullen heavings vex the labouring ground :
Perhaps His presence through all depth and height,
Best of all gems, that deck His crown of light,
The haughty eye may dazzle and confound.

"God is not in the earthquake ; but, behold,
From Sinai's caves are bursting, as of old,
The flame of His consuming jealous ire.
Woe to the sinner, should stern Justice prove
His chosen attribute : but He in love
Hastes to proclaim, 'God is not in the fire.'

"The storm is o'er—and, hark ! a still, small voice
Steals on the ear, to say, Jehovah's choice
Is ever with the soft, meek, tender soul :
By soft, meek, tender ways He loves to draw
The sinner, startled by His ways of awe :
Here is our Lord, and not where thunders roll.

"Go, to the world return, nor fear to cast
Thy bread upon the waters, sure at last
In joy to find it after many days.
The work be thine, the fruit thy children's part ;
Choose to believe, not see ; sight tempts the heart
From sober walking in true Gospel ways."

KEDLE.

GEN. xxii. 14.

"And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh."

EXOD. xvii. 15.

"And Moses built an altar, and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi."

JUDGES vi. 24.

"Then Gideon built an altar there unto the Lord, and called it Jehovah-shalom."

EZEK. xlvi. 35.

"And the name of the city from that day shall be Jehovah-shammah."

JER. xxiii. 6.

"And this is His name whereby He shall be called Jehovah-tsdkenu."

THE sorest trial of Abraham's faith had just ended,—his well-beloved Isaac was saved from the sacrificial altar, and another offering was presented in his stead. Well, then, might the patriarch rear a stone of remembrance, with the inscription graven on his own heart, "The Lord *will* provide."

Moses, the leader of Israel, with the rod or

God in his hand, was seated on the top of a hill, in the valley of Rephidim. Beside him, stood Aaron and Hur, supporting his arms in the attitude of prayer. Beneath, the hosts of Israel and Amalek were engaged in stern and bloody conflict. Victory, hitherto, had leant to neither side, for any length of time. When the hands of Moses were raised, then Israel prevailed; and, when they were let down, Amalek prevailed. But now it was no longer uncertain. The three united suppliants implored Divine help; "and Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword." No wonder, a feeling of security was experienced by Moses, and that future danger was no longer dreaded,—no wonder that the motto of *his* remembrance-stone was this, "The Lord my banner."

A dark cloud had gathered upon Israel,—they had forgotten the wonders of the Lord, and His mighty doings in their behalf. The hosts of Midian prevailed against them, and the last ray of hope seemed to have vanished. Their cry for help and deliverance, sent up in the hour of extremity, was answered by the Lord, in reminding them of their transgressions, and of His patience and forbearance.

No promise of immediate help was vouchsafed. But now, as ever, "man's extremity became God's opportunity,"—an angel appeared unto Gideon, "as he threshed wheat in the wine-press, to hide it from the Midianites," and revealed the purpose of the Lord, to make him the deliverer of Israel. Poor, and without influence, Gideon feared to occupy this high and responsible position, but he was cheered by the promise, "I will be with thee." A sign was granted, to assure him, that he was the appointed messenger of God. Upon the offering which he presented to the angel, fire descended from heaven, "and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes." Need we wonder that, when entering on the great undertaking, his heart, oppressed and downcast, at the thought of Israel's woes, and of the horrors of war, which wrung from them the cry of bitterest anguish, the altar-stone should be inscribed by Gideon, "Jehovah-shalom,"—"The Lord send peace."

The prophet Ezekiel, when declaring the division of the land among the twelve tribes, and the extent of the glorious city, gave this as its great and glorious distinction, "Jehovah-shammah,"—"The Lord is there."

The prophet Jeremiah, when foretelling the advent of Messiah, the righteous Branch, who was to make satisfaction for the sins of His people, and by His obedience, and sufferings, and death, reconcile them to an offended God, speaks of Him by a name dear to every believer, "Jehovah-tsidkenu,"—"The Lord our righteousness."

Christian! hast *thou* no stones of remembrance? Along the pathway of *thy* life are there no memorials of Jehovah's love? Ah, yes! Thou, too, canst tell of seasons of danger and distress,—when prayer prevailed on high,—when, from the depths of thy troubled soul, the cry ascended heavenward, "Lord, send help out of Zion," and deliverance was vouchsafed. The enemy came in upon you like a flood; but even then, when the contest was fiercest, and the battle raged hottest, "the Spirit of the Lord" lifted up His standard, and the victory was thine. Surely, in such an hour, this was the language of thy soul, "Jehovah-nissi,"—"The Lord my banner."

Or, look backward again. Remember that time, when some heavy trial was impending over thee, some sore bereavement was dread-

ed, at the prospect of which, thy very heart failed thee, and the sunshine of thy life was wrapt in deepest gloom. But thy God in mercy spared the blow,—the trial came not,—the bereavement was stayed, and again the voice of rejoicing was heard in thy home. And, if an anxious thought still lingered in thy heart, and the shadow of the cloud still darkened at times thy pathway, oh ! was not this, to thee, a cheering and consolatory thought, that come what may, He who listened to thy prayer for *deliverance*, would also listen to thy prayer for *grace*, and that the covenant between thee and thy God, permitted thee to utter these blessed words, “Jehovah-jireh,”—“The Lord will provide?”

Yes, believer ! and, times there may have been in thy past history, when the burden of sin was peculiarly oppressive, when thy soul was bereft of comfort and peace, and, as with trembling step and aching heart, thou didst pursue thy weary journey, the language of thy burdened spirit was that of David, “My soul is cast down within me.” For thee, there was no comfort in the Word, no joy in the means of grace, no happiness in prayer. Like a benighted traveller, thou

wert groping in darkness, and, all the while, the whispered inquiry and taunt of the great adversary was, "Where is now thy God?"

But, thy trial hour came to a close. The Comforter's voice again was heard; the light of thy Father's countenance shone upon thee; and, once more glad and joyous, the prayer of Gideon became thine, "Jehovah-shalom,"—"The Lord send peace."

Reader! thou hast entered the sanctuary; thou hast taken thy place at the communion table. Has the language of thy soul been this:—"Jehovah-shammah,"—"The Lord is there?" Trusting no longer in thyself, but coming to the mercy-seat, poor, hungry, and penitent, was this thy prayer?—"O God, have mercy upon me a miserable sinner. Pardon and accept me, for the sake of Him whom Thou hast revealed as 'Jehovah-tsid-kenu,'—"The Lord our righteousness.'"

- “Why should I fear the darkest hour,
Or tremble at the tempest's power?
Jesus vouchsafes to be my *Tower!*
- “Though hot the fight, why quit the field?
Why must I either flee or yield,
Since Jesus is my mighty *Shield?*
- “When creature comforts fade and die,
Worldlings may weep, but why should I?
Jesus still lives and still is *nigh!*
- “I know not what may soon betide,
Nor how my wants may be supp'ied;
But Jesus knows, and ‘*will provide.*’
- “Though sin would fill me with distress,
The throne of grace I dare address,
For Jesus is my *Righteousness.*
- “Though faint my prayers and cold my love,
My steadfast hope shall not remove,
While Jesus *intercedes* above.
- “Against me earth and hell combine,
But on my side is power Divine:
Jesus is *all*, and He is *mine.*”

Contentment.

EXOD. xxiii. 25.

"And ye shall serve the Lord your God, and he shall bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee."

DEUT. xxvi. 11.

"And thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine house, thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you."

PSALM xxxvii. 16.

"A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked."

PHILIP. iv. 11.

"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."

I TIM. vi. 6.


"But godliness with contentment is great gain."

- " My God, my Father, while I stray
 Far from my home in life's rough way,
 Oh ! teach me from my heart to say,
 'Thy will be done.'
- " Though dark my path, and poor my lot,
 Let me 'be still,' and murmur not ;
 Or breathe the prayer divinely taught,
 'Thy will be done.'
- " If Thou shouldst call me to resign
 What most I prize, it ne'er was mine ;
 I only yield Thee what was Thine—
 'Thy will be done.'
- " Should pining sickness waste away
 My life in premature decay,
 My Father ! still I strive to say,
 'Thy will be done.'
- " If but my fainting heart be blest
 With Thy sweet Spirit for its guest,
 My God ! to *Thee* I leave the rest,
 'Thy will be done.'
- " Renew my will from day to day ;
 Blend it with Thine, and take away
 All that now makes it hard to say,
 'Thy will be done.'
- " Then, when on earth I breathe no more,
 The prayer half-mix'd with tears before,
 I'll sing upon a happier shore,
 'Thy will be done.'"

MISS ELLIOT.

PROV. XV. 16.

"Better is a little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure and trouble therewith."

HE verdict of the world is very different. Notwithstanding the oft-repeated declarations of Scripture, myriads are daily hasting to become rich. Onwards, they rush with unabated ardour, to reach the object of their ambition ; and, despite failure, misfortune, and frequent disappointment, they return afresh to the struggle. And, alas ! how often do they receive, as their miserable reward, premature old age, and the unquenched cravings of avarice and passion. Wise was the prayer of Agur,—“Give me neither poverty nor riches ; feed me with food convenient for me ;” for the pangs of poverty excite repining, and the possession of riches is sure to arouse the envious. He, who would walk securely along the pathway of life, will choose the middle course ; and his prayer will be,

“Teach me, O Lord, in whatever state I am, therewith to be content.” Christian! religion forbids thee *not*, to acquire riches,—to be industrious in thy worldly calling. But, if thy plans *should* prosper,—thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy treasure be increased,—remember, there *is* danger in thy fulness. Thy heart may be weaned from God, and all thy best and purest affections may be perverted. “The fear of the Lord” *alone* can keep thee safe. Then wilt thou regard thyself as a steward, bound to devote thy substance to the glory of God, and to promote His cause and kingdom on the earth. And, should thy lot be one of poverty, still, “the fear of the Lord” will keep *thee* from repining. Bethink you, how many are in sorer straits, who have to bear heavier burdens, and, on whose every plan, seems to have been written the inscription, “*Failure and disappointment.*” Because *your* path has for a season been a thorny one,—because some of *your* hopes have been blasted,—because everything is not ordered according to *your* wishes, are you to sit down, murmuring and dissatisfied? Are you wiser than your heavenly Father? Would He lay upon you an unneces-

sary burden? Nay, has He not told you,—has not your own experience proved,—that riches *alone* cannot confer happiness?—that better is the crust of bread and the cup of water, with God's blessing, than all the riches of the earth without His favour? Seek, by His grace, to *learn* contentment with thy lot, to regard it as the appointment of thy heavenly Father. When thy cup is full, pray that it may be carried with a grateful hand; when the stream of earthly happiness is dried up, lean on the arm of thy covenant God, and say, "All was needed." Look forward, Christian, whatever be thy circumstances, to your *portion* in eternity. Let the language of your soul be,—

"From darkness here, and dreariness,
We ask not full repose;
Only be Thou at hand, to bless
Our trial hour of woes.
Is not the pilgrim's toil o'erpaid
By the clear rill and palmy shade?
And see we not, up earth's dark glade,
The gate of heaven unclosed?"

"Riches profit not in the day of wrath;" but, having the "fear of God," and, being numbered among His chosen ones, thou art secure of happiness. Heaven and its

joys await thee; the pleasures which are at God's right hand shall be thine; the riches of eternity thou shalt inherit, when thrones and dominions, and all that earth contains, shall crumble into ashes. Submit thyself, then, without a murmur to the hand of God, to assign thee prosperity, or to visit with adversity. Seek thus, not only to secure thine own peace and comfort, but to be a blessing to all around thee; for, a contented mind sheds a halo on every side, and diffuses happiness wherever it exists. And, forget not, that true contentment consists, in a ready and cheerful compliance with the will of God,—in our patient continuance in our honest employments and callings,—in our thankful use of external blessings, and our honest endeavours to procure them,—in the diligent effort to do good in our stations, so long as we continue in them; and not, either in shunning all contact with the world, or murmuring because some other position has not been assigned us. Let this, then, be the spirit of your daily prayer:—

“Vouchsafe us, O Lord, Thy heavenly grace, that we may learn, in whatever state

are, therewith to be content; may we so
rn to do and endure Thy will, that at
gth, through the discipline here under-
ie, we may be fitted for thy heavenly king-
n, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

"O faithless, unbelieving heart !
So slow to trust that tend'rest Friend,
Who aye will *needful* strength impart,
Who 'loving, loves unto the end.'
"No longer doubt, nor fear, nor grieve,
Nor on uncertain evils dwell ;
Past, present, future, calmly leave
To Him who will 'do all things well.'"

"Father, I know that all my life
Is portion'd out for me ;
And the changes that will surely come,
I do not fear to see ;
But I ask Thee for a patient mind,
Intent on pleasing Thee.
"I ask Thee for a thoughtful love,
Through constant watching, wise,
To meet the glad with joyful smiles,
And to wipe the weeping eyes ;
And a heart at leisure from itself,
To soothe and sympathise.

- " I would not have the restless way,
That hurries to and fro,
Seeking for some great thing to do,
Or secret thing to know ;
I would be treated as a child,
And guided where I go.
- " Wherever in the world I am,
In whatsoe'er estate,
I have a fellowship with hearts
To keep and cultivate,
And a work of lowly love to do,
For the Lord on whom I wait.
- " So I ask Thee for the daily strength,
To none that ask denied,
And a mind to blend with outward life
While keeping at Thy side,—
Content to fill a little space,
If Thou be glorified.
- " And if some things I do not ask
In my cup of blessing be,
I would have my spirit fill'd the more
With grateful love to Thee,
And careful less to serve Thee much,
Than to please Thee perfectly.
- " There are briars besetting every path,
Which call for patient care ;
There is a cross in every lot,
And an earnest need for prayer ;
But a lowly heart that leans on Thee
Is happy everywhere.
- " In a service which Thy love appoints
There are no bonds for me,
For my secret heart is taught 'the truth'
That makes Thy children 'free ;'
And a life of self-renouncing love,
Is a life of liberty."

Diligence.

PROV. x. 4.

"He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand : but the hand of the diligent maketh rich."

PROV. xii. 24.

"The hand of the diligent shall bear rule : but the slothful shall be under tribute."

PROV. xxi. 5.

"The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness ; but of every one that is hasty only to want."

PROV. xxii. 29.

"Seest thou a man diligent in his business ? he shall stand before kings ; he shall not stand before mean men."

PROV. xxviii. 19.

"He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread : but he that followeth after vain persons shall have poverty enough."

2 PETER i. 5, 10.

"And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue ; and to virtue, knowledge. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure : for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall."

2 PETER iii. 14.

"Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless."

F

" Scorn not the slightest word or deed,
Nor deem it void of power ;
There's fruit in each wind-wafted seed,
Waiting its natal hour.

" A whisper'd word may touch the heart,
And call it back to life ;
A look of love bid sin depart,
And still unholy strife.

" No act falls fruitless : none can tell
How vast its power may be,
Nor what results unfolded dwell
Within it silently.

" Work, and despair not : give thy mite,
Nor care how small it be,—
God is with all who serve the right,
The holy, true, and free."

ECCLES. ix. 10.

“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might : for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.”



WE have here a solemn warning, peculiarly impressive to some, yet applicable to all. To the aged Christian, these words seem to say, “You are nearing the grave, and you have still much to do. Seek to realise the position in which you stand. You are ‘a worker, together with God,’ in the world,—placed here to advance His glory,—to promote the interests of His kingdom,—to improve every talent entrusted to your care. The time, in which you can labour and shew diligence, is rapidly passing away. Opportunities of doing good are not to be recalled at will. If not seized upon at the moment, they are gone for ever. The sunshine is declining,—the shadows are falling longer and deeper around you,—the evening of life is closing in.

—the last, the eleventh hour will soon be here ; therefore take heed, and ‘ whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.’ ”

To the young, a similar warning is given : “ Look abroad on the world,—see, there, the field for labour, the field thou art called upon to assist in tilling. Are there no hungry to be fed ? no naked to be clothed ? no ignorant to be instructed ? Have you time for pleasure and gaiety,—time for worldly converse and the festive scene,—but none for works of charity and labours of love ? How is it with your own spiritual condition ? Are you growing in grace ? increasing in the love of prayer ? more earnest in studying God’s Word ? in seeking the illumination of the Holy Spirit ? Remember who it was that suggested the momentous question, ‘ What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ? ’ ”

He, who is indifferent about his own state before God, will scarcely be interested in regard to the condition of his fellow-men. To struggle in behalf of others, we must first struggle for ourselves,—real religion knows nothing of that spurious charity which would attend to

all to the neglect of self, and seek to promote the salvation of the souls of others, whilst the man suffers his own to perish. Every man's own soul, is to him, a treasury of heavenly treasures,—the salvation of that soul ought to be to him “the one thing needful.” See, yon swimmer struggling amid the foaming billows,—he gazes round him with an anxious eye,—he grasps the floating spar,—his ship-mates are wrestling with the angry waves,—but, what to him is the danger of others compared with his own?—he sees the distant shore,—oh! that he might plant his foot on the stable rock,—he presses on,—leaves behind him the struggling crowds,—his *first* and *chief* anxiety is to reach the shore,—to save *his own* life. Or, see that crowded hall where thousands have assembled to hear the message of the gospel,—a cry is raised that the building has given way,—the immense assemblage is moved,—onwards the excited thousands rush,—friends, acquaintance, all are left behind,—*escape* is the only, the all-pervading thought; and, as they hurry along, every eye is fixed on the doorway, and every heart beats with the desire for self-preservation. Even so, with regard to the salvation

of the soul. "Escape for *thy* life," is the warning given; the time is short and uncertain,—if you do not secure it, *before* you go to the grave, *afterward* it will be impossible.

And, if there is much to be done for *ourselves*, there is much, too, for others. How numerous the claims from the domestic circle! Parents! those children who surround you, look up to you for instruction; and, this you are to enforce, by the uniform illustration of a holy and devoted life, and by the fervour of persevering and importunate prayer. Have you a family altar? Is the Sabbath hallowed in your dwelling? Have you endeavoured to obey the Saviour's injunction, "Suffer them to come unto me, and forbid them not?"

Reader! whosoever thou art,—there is a work assigned thee. Something may be done for God,—some department of Christian benevolence there is, in which thou art called to put forth the activities of thy nature. It does not require very splendid talent to be useful. The great thing wanted, is a sincere and earnest desire to do good. God requires of you, not according to what you have *not*, but according to what you *have*. Oh, how many

are there, living on from day to day in selfish indolence, instead of labouring "to do what they can," in the circle in which they move, for the good of men, and for the glory of God ! How many are spending their lives without one effort to make "a bad world better !" They are satisfied if they lead, as they imagine, *harmless* lives,—forgetting, that sins of omission as well as sins of commission,—duties neglected as well as duties performed, are noted down in the book of God's remembrance.

Christian reader ! to you, these words have a peculiar importance. You know that there are rewards in eternity,—all purchased, indeed, by the precious blood of your Saviour-God,—but, bestowed more largely upon those who have been diligent and faithful. Your Master tells you, that He has in store places of higher dignity, stations of loftier eminence, crowns of more dazzling brightness, and sceptres of more extended dominion, in that glorious kingdom, of which *even now* you are a subject and an heir ; and He urges you, to strive for a place nigh the throne,—to enter the lists in this noble contest, and become a competitor for His choicest and

most radiant of prizes. Surely, then, it becomes you, to put forth all your energies,—to strive, with ever-increasing diligence, that you may secure a lofty station in the Saviour's kingdom. You may tell us, you can be satisfied with the lowest ; and, in one sense, you ought to be. To be privileged to *enter* the gates of the celestial city, is an honour, far too great for sinful man ; and, he who is permitted to mingle with the glorious company who stand upon the sea of glass, will find eternity itself *too short* to utter forth his Saviour's praise. But, it is indolence, and not humility, which would make contentment with the lowest a reason for not aspiring to the highest. “ To tell you, therefore, that there is no knowledge nor device in the grave, whither thou goest,—it is telling the wrestler, that the glass is running out, and the game is not won,—it is telling the warrior, that the shadows are thickening, and the victory is not complete,—it is telling the racer, that night is drawing on, and the goal is not reached.” Most appropriately has it been said, that these words are “ just blowing an alarm-peal,—just the upbraiding of lethargy,—just the animating to effort.” Is it a time

to be idle, when each moment's delay may take a pearl from the crown,—a plume from the wing,—sway from the sceptre? Is it a time to be inactive, when every second leaves me a step lower than I might have ascended in the scale of triumph and of majesty? Is it a time to sit with folded hands, when the grave is opening, and there is work to be done which can only be done here, and the day is approaching, on which rewards shall be bestowed, and perhaps, as yet, I am but last in the ranks of candidates? Rather, ought we not to rouse ourselves? and say, "Whatsoever our hand findeth to do, let us do it with our might;" for "the night is far spent, and the day is at hand."

Reader, labour to do God's work, and be this your daily prayer:—

"Now may grace be imparted to each one of us,—so to believe and to rejoice in Christ Jesus,—so to follow His footsteps, and to imitate His example,—that, finally, we may all meet together, as His ransomed people, in the heavenly kingdom!"

“ Oh ! grant that I may love Thee first,
The source of all my heart desires ;
While forth upon my brethren burst
The kindly beams Thy love inspires.

“ Give me strong faith, to know, to feel,
And to believe Thee ever near ;
Watching my wayward spirit's weal,
Receiving each repentant tear.

“ So, safely through this world's turmoil,
Unhurt, untainted, may I roam,
Until o'erpast each mortal toil,
I find in heaven a welcome home.”

Daily Strength.

DEUT. xxxiii. 27, 29.

"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee, and shall say, Destroy them. Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places."

PSALM xl. 17.

"But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God."

ISA. xli. 10, 13, 14.

"Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not: I will help thee. Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel; I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel."

ROM. viii. 31.

"What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?"

HEB. xiii. 6.

"So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

"What, though my strength decline
And health no more return,
I now possess a hope divine
Which bids me not to mourn.

"In Christ I have believed,
And, through the spotless Lamb,
Grace and salvation have received;
In Him complete I am !

"Then come what may to me,
It will, it must be blest ;
Home in the distance I can see,
There I shall be at rest.

"And is it grief to me,
My journey to commence ;
Though long and dark the stages be
Which *homeward* lead from hence ?

"Oh, no ! the flesh must shrink,
From suffering, and unrest ;
But calmly on my *home* I think,
And even now feel blest."

DEUT. xxxiii. 25.

“As thy days, so shall thy strength be.”



THE Christian is frequently compared to a pilgrim,—travelling onwards through a dreary wilderness, to the promised land of Canaan,—and his experience is varied and chequered. The path before him may be steep and arduous,—he may have to pass through rough and stony places,—through dark, thick forests, and rapid streams, and raging hurricanes,—his days may be such, as to require great strength, and energy, and patience. Oftentimes, when he strives to anticipate the future, his heart sinks within him, his courage fails, and he is apt to give way to despondency and doubt. But, such a promise as that vouchsafed to Asher, and to all the true Israel of God, may well suffice to calm the believer's fears, and reanimate his fainting spirit. It is *true*, that changes and vicissitudes *will* come,—*true*, that the

heart, which to-day is cheerful and happy, may to-morrow be wounded and bleeding,—*true*, that the full cup, now held with gladness, may be dashed in pieces, ere the lips have tasted the refreshing draught,—*true*, that the bright hope, which, like a guiding star, allures the traveller onwards, may speedily be enwrapt in pitchy gloom,—but what then? To the child of God, there is a supply of strength to meet the hour of trial. He is not permitted to escape from the burden, the cross, the difficulty,—but he is enabled to make his way through them all,—to struggle with and finally to overcome them. Many a time, when the believer has been wellnigh crushed under the oppressive weight,—when, conscious that ordinary strength would not avail, he has cried unto the Lord, and a fresh supply of grace has been vouchsafed to meet the emergency,—so that he could say with David, “I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our

God : many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord."

It were easy for God, to make the path heavenward, plain and unobstructed to His children,—easy, to remove all care, anxiety, and sorrow,—but, such is not His purpose. Earth is the training-school for heaven. He wills that they *should* be tried,—that "through much tribulation they should enter the kingdom,"—that their spiritual natures should be refined and purified in the furnace of affliction,—and that thus, by the very struggles and pains of their earthly pilgrimage, they should become more and more fit for serving Him in this world, and more and more meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. Even, as the racer in a course, has to undergo preparation, and, by regimen and exercise, becomes better fitted for the severe trial that awaits him,—even, as the mariner, by successive voyages on the stormy ocean, becomes more skilful and daring,—even, as the soldier, who has passed through a long and dangerous campaign, becomes bold, courageous, and self-denying,—so the Christian, by each difficulty he is called on to encounter, by each trial he is summoned to bear, by each virtue

he is required to call into exercise, becomes more vigorous, earnest, faithful, and Christ-like. His soul is gradually training and strengthening,—by duty, trial, and endurance here,—for glory, honour, and immortality hereafter. And if, at any time, amid the rough and rugged parts of life's journey, his feet are not kept from falling nor his eyes from tears, the reason most probably is, that he has already failed to improve the strength and grace imparted,—that, like a sword lying in the scabbard, his religion has not come into active, daily exercise, amid the lesser duties, trials, and struggles which have marked his previous history. For if, when overwhelming griefs and soul-agonising troubles come upon us, we would be calm, patient, and submissive, we must have long and sedulously exercised the graces of the Christian character, amid the minor anxieties and the lesser sorrows of daily life. Reader ! imagine not, that *only* when in sore straits and pressing emergencies, are you required to make religion your stay, and to exercise the spirit which it enjoins ;—imagine not, that in the time of sickness or the solemn hour of death, you can lay hold of gospel promises at

will, and derive from them consolation and support, if, in the season of health and the day of your prosperity, they are not in all your thoughts. If you do, you will be miserably disappointed. To be "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might," when the dark storm gathers overhead, and the muttering thunder is heard, you must have used the grace vouchsafed for *past* emergencies, and exercised the powers which He has already graciously conferred. Remember, "*growth* in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," does not consist so much in *extent* of knowledge, as in *depth* of knowledge ;—knowing things better : not so much in new duties as in old duties better done, the drudgeries of life gone through in a brighter, happier, and more Christian spirit,—knowing that life is made up, in a great measure, of little and common and trivial things, but still doing these little and trivial things with a more single eye to the Lord,—with more self-distrust, and therefore with more dependence upon God,—with greater humility,—with more prayer, so that self is gradually but surely extinguished, and we become strong, both to do and to endure

the will of God. Yes, believer, you are *insensibly*, it may be, yet most *assuredly* increasing your spiritual strength; by each single act of faith and charity and self-denial,—by shewing in your daily walk, more love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance,—by your Christian deportment, in your family circle and in the haunts of business, amid all the occupations and requirements of life. In the right performance of one duty, you will become better fitted for the performance of the next. Every fresh victory over pride,—over vanity,—over avarice,—over selfishness,—over fretfulness, makes us stronger for the time to come, and ensures the fulfilment of the promise, “As thy days, so shall thy strength be.” Christian! mark again these words. They do not give the pledge, that we shall *not* feel the burden and heat of the day. All they promise is, that we shall get safely through. They do not say, that we shall *not* feel the weight of our duties, trials, temptations, conflicts; all they say is, that we shall have strength to bear their weight, and journey on with our load. The grace imparted, will then be “sufficient” for us,—not superabundant, but suffi-

cient for our actual necessities,—strength equal to our day. Christian! distress not yourself about *impending* evils. You think, you have not strength for the hour of sickness. Use the strength, you now have, in the day of health, and the promise will not *then* fail you. You fear, you have not strength for the thorny path of adversity,—tread humbly and thankfully the path of prosperity, and you will not *then* be refused consolation and support. You fear you are unprepared to meet the King of Terrors, and to enter the gloomy valley. Live to the glory of God, and, as be-seems your Christian profession, and, *when* you are summoned to depart, His rod and staff will *then* uphold and comfort you. It is by putting forth the strength already gained, that you may hope to stand your ground, when greater exertion and more vigorous effort are demanded. Strength to encounter the tempest will be given when the tempest rages,—strength to breast the foaming surges will be given when the hurricane has actually come,—strength to grapple with the last enemy will be given when he comes forth to meet you. Yes, Christian! be assured, grace and strength will be imparted

when you need them, as certainly as they will be withheld *before you need them*. He who guides you, knows your necessities, and, in the day of trouble, will not leave you comfortless. Journey on, then, with firmness,—relying on the promise of Him who is faithful and true!—your day is coming,—you will, ere long, enter into your final rest, and repose from all your labours,—you will take possession of the promised inheritance, and will then acknowledge with a grateful heart, “As my days, so my strength has been.” Let this be your daily cry :—

“O Lord, increase my strength, and give me grace, to use it daily, for the promotion of Thy glory, and for the healthy development of my own soul, that, in Thy good time, I may be prepared for another and a better world.”

“Source of my life’s refreshing springs,
Whose presence in my heart sustains me,
Thy love appoints me pleasant things,
Thy mercy orders all that pains me.

“If loving hearts were never lonely,
If all they wish might always be,
Accepting what they look for only,
They might be glad,—but not in Thee.

' Well may Thine own belov'd, who see
In all their lot their Father's pleasure,
Bear loss of all they love, save Thee,
Their living, everlasting Treasure.

" Well may Thy happy children cease
From restless wishes prone to sin,
And, in Thy own exceeding peace,
Yield to Thy daily discipline.

" We need as much the cross we bear
As air we breathe, as light we see :
It draws us to Thy side in prayer,
It binds us to our strength in Thee."

A. L. WARING.

" Dreary and long our course may be,
But, O our God, it leads to Thee !
Thou art the Light by which we roam,
Thou art our everlasting Home.

" Earth and its pains we still may feel,
But Thou art ever near to heal ;
Still as our day, our strength shall be,
For all our cares are borne by Thee.

" Thy mighty arm to smoothe our way,
Thy Light to turn our night to day,
Onward with firmer steps we roam,
On to our everlasting Home."

- " Afflicted soul, to Christ draw near,
Thy Saviour's gracious promise hear ;
His faithful word declares to thee,
That ' as thy day, thy strength shall be !
- " Let not thy heart despond, and say,
How shall I stand this trying day ?
He has engaged, by firm decree,
That ' as thy day, thy strength shall be !
- " Thy faith is weak, thy foes are strong,
Perhaps the conflict may be long ;
Yet shall at last thy sorrows flee,
And ' as thy day, thy strength shall be !
- " When hov'ring death appears in view,
Christ's presence shall thy fears subdue ;
He smiles, and sets thy spirit free,
For ' as thy days, thy strength shall be !
- " When in that after-world of rest,
Where ransom'd souls are fully blest,
How time in retrospect shall prove,
The word which told thee ' all is love ! "

Progress.

JOHN x. 28, 29.

“And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.”

ROM. viii. 38, 39.

“For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

PHILIP. i. 6.

“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it, until the day of Jesus Christ.”

1 THESS. v. 23, 24.

“And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.”

2 THESS. iii. 3.

“But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.”

1 PETER i. 5.

“Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.”

Ps. cxxxviii. 8.

“The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands.”

- " How sweet the closing hour of day,
When all is peaceful and serene ;
And the broad sun's retiring ray
Sheds a mild lustre o'er the scene !
- " Such is the Christian's parting hour,
So peacefully he sinks to rest ;
And faith, rekindling all its power,
Lights up the languor of his breast.
- " There is a radiance in his eye,
A smile upon his wasted cheek,
That seems to tell of glory nigh,
In language that no tongue can speak.
- " A beam from heaven is sent to cheer
The pilgrim on his gloomy road ;
And angels are attending near,
To bear him to their bright abode.
- " Who would not wish to die like those
Whom God's own Spirit deigns to bless,—
To sink into that soft repose,
Then wake to perfect happiness ?
- " O Lord ! that we may thus depart,
Thy joys to share, Thy face to see,
Impress Thine image on our heart,
And teach us now to walk with Thee."

BATHURST.

PROV. iv. 18.

"The path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."



F, in the Word of God, the Christian is likened to a *pilgrim*, we find also his life compared to a *journey*, and, perhaps, one reason for this comparison is, that he is always making *progress* in the way. There is no standing still. Days, and months, and years, hurry on with resistless impetuosity. The child soon passes into the youth; the youth into the man; the man into the aged veteran leaning on his staff. And, there is another *progress* made by every one of us. There is a path in the formation of *character*, equally inevitable, which must be trodden, whether the result be good or bad. The events which happen,—the companions with whom we associate,—the deeds of daily life,—the very thoughts which pass through the mind,—all combine in leading on the man, and in form-

ing his character. This is especially true with regard to the believer in Christ; and how often is he exhorted to press forwards and onwards! "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ." "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure." "Press forward to the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." "Be not weary in well-doing, for, in due season, ye shall reap if ye faint not." "Furthermore, we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would *abound* more and more." It is impossible for the believer to pause in his heavenward journey. He is either advancing or going backward,—not, while the pulse though feeble yet beats,—not, while the eye though dim yet moves, is there a single period when he can say, "Here will I rest." "Forwards and onwards" must ever be his motto; and, as he grasps with firmness the banner of the Cross, and gazes upon it in its blood-stained beauty, and sees those golden letters "by this conquer" inscribed upon it, he must follow where it leads,—engaging in fresh conflicts,—surmounting fresh difficulties, and

gaining fresh laurels, and the loftiest flight of his ambition must be, to heave his last sigh beneath its shadow,—assured that his path is to terminate in glory,—that his death will be the death of victory, and that victory the victory of heaven.

Christian! behold the path of the just,—of those, who, all guilty in themselves, are justified in Christ. It is, as a “*shining* light.” Yes, the believer was “sometime darkness,” but now he is light in the Lord.” Once, he was ignorant of God in Christ, now he can say “Abba, Father.” Once, he dwelt in the darkness of sin, but now he has been called into God’s marvellous light. Once, he trod the path of obscurity and gloom, now he follows “the Light of the world.” No longer blinded by the god of this world,—no longer governed by that spirit which hides all that is invisible, real, and eternal,—he “lets his light shine before men,”—he “holds forth the word of life.” Christian! have you ground to believe that such is *your* path?

If so, it is also as a *progressive* light. Even as the dawn of morn creeps gradually on the earth,—gray streaks of light brightening the eastern horizon, revealing the dark and dis-

tant outline of the lofty hills,—gradually illuminating glen and valley, and sweeping away the lingering mists of night,—so, from the first dawn of spiritual light upon the soul,—even amid gloom and shadow, there is an onward progress,—faith, and hope, and love are invigorated,—the spiritual understanding is matured,—richer consolations are enjoyed, and the heart expands to the warm rays of the “Sun of Righteousness.”

And this path is most surely to conduct to the “*perfect day*.” What certain harbingers of the rising sun are the first streaks of dawn ! Thick mists may hover over the earth,—dark clouds may shroud her,—wild storms may sweep along the plains ; still, in silent and undeviating progress, the sun will rise,—and, as surely as he rises, so will he attain his meridian splendour. Equally certain may we be, that the first dawn of spiritual light is the undeviating precursor of a perfect day of glory. The day of grace once begun, must advance. There may be many hindrances,—clouds of dark and mysterious providences ; but nothing shall impede its course,—nothing shall arrest its progress. The Sun risen on the soul, with healing in His wings,

shall never stand still,—onwards it will roll in its glorious orbit, penetrating with its beams every dark recess, until all mental shadows are merged and lost in its unclouded and eternal splendour. See the Christian, after he has descended into the gloomy valley, and crossed the billows of the Jordan! He stands upon Immanuel's shore, amid the splendours of that everlasting day, whose sun shall set no more. Grace, the day-dawn, has now yielded to glory, "the perfect day." The weary pilgrim has emerged from the shadows of his pilgrimage, and has entered that world, of which it is said, "There shall be no night there." Dwells he on the perils and dangers through which he has passed,—the pains, and sufferings, and privations of his journey,—the toils, and trials, and anxieties of his life,—as if they had been too numerous, painful, and agonizing? Ah, no! Methinks, as he enters within the portals of the eternal city, with its wall of sapphire, and its gate of pearl,—as he gazes on the eternal throne, and Him who sits upon it, and takes up His golden harp,—this will form the burden of his song—"Bless the Lord, O my soul, for His converting

grace,—His providential dealings,—His unceasing care and love. Saviour God, Thou hast led me by the right way,—I now see by what Thy dispensations towards me were regulated, and in what happiness they have ended. I was chastened of the Lord, that I might not be condemned with the world. Though I then did sow in tears, yet now I reap in joy. Often didst Thou turn my gloomy night into sunny day. Many a dark cloud of my pilgrimage hast Thou fringed with Thy golden beams. By Thy light I have walked through darkness many a long and lonely stage of my journey. Blessed Saviour! I praise Thee for Thy *sustaining* grace,—for Thy cheering presence,—for Thine unwavering faithfulness, for Thy tender love; —I praise Thee for the pains and sorrows, the afflictions and bereavements of my earthly lot. All were needed. With not one stormy cloud,—not one night of suffering,—with not one ingredient in my cup of sorrow could I safely have dispensed. Now I can see with what infinite wisdom and tender love, Thou wast appointing all, and guiding all, and overruling all the varied turnings and windings of my earthly journey. Now I find, by

blessed experience, the truth of those words, which I so often heard in the days of my flesh, that my 'labour has not been in vain in the Lord.'" Reader, be this your prayer:—

"Vouchsafe, O God, to lead and guide me by Thy counsel here, and afterward receive me into glory."

"Soon—and for ever,
The breaking of day
Shall drive all the night-clouds
Of sorrow away.
Soon—and for ever,
We'll see as we're seen,
And learn the deep meaning
Of things that have been
When fightings without us,
And fears from within,
Shall weary no more
In the warfare of sin;
Where tears, and where fears,
And where death shall be never,
Christians with Christ shall be
Soon—and for ever."

J. MONSELL.

" Let Reason vainly boast her power
To teach her children how to die ;
The sinner, in a dying hour,
Needs more than Reason can supply ;
A view of Christ, the sinner's Friend,
Alone can cheer him in the end.

" When nature sinks beneath disease,
And every earthly hope is fled,
What then can give the sinner ease,
And make him love a dying bed ?
Jesus ! Thy smile his heart can cheer ;
He's blest, e'en then, if Thou art near.

" The Gospel does salvation bring,
And Jesus is the Gospel theme ;
In death redeemed sinners sing,
And triumph in the Saviour's name :
' O death, where is thy sting ? ' they cry,
' O grave, where is thy victory ? '

" Then let me die the death of those
Whom Jesus washes in His blood,
Who on His faithfulness repose,
And know that He indeed is God ;
Around His throne we all shall meet,
And cast our crowns beneath His feet."

KELLY.

Assurance.

2 SAM. xxiii. 5.

"Although my house be not so with God ; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure : for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow."

ISA. lv. 3.

"Incline your ear, and come unto me : hear, and your soul shall live ; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David."

HOSEA ii. 19.

"And I will betroth thee unto me for ever ; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies."

JOEL iii. 16.

"The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem ; and the heavens and the earth shall shake : but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel."

2 TIM. i. 7.

"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear ; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

JOB xi. 15.

"For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot ; yea, thou shalt be steadfast, and shalt not fear."

PS. xxxi. 24.

"Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord."

ISA. xii. 2.

"Behold, God is my salvation ; I will trust, and not be afraid : for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song ; he also is become my salvation."

“ Lord ! my every hope reposes
Solely, thankfully on Thee ;
But, as yet, Thy light discloses
Guilt, and only guilt in me ;
Take off my polluted dress,
Robe me in Thy righteousness.

Though I feel my sufferings painful,
Worn in body, faint in mind,
Welcome will they prove, and gainful,
If they work the end design'd.
Make it, Lord, my hourly prayer,
In Thy holiness to share.

“ Soon, Thy glorious work completed,
Sufferings I shall need no more ;
Pure in heart and new created,
Thou Thine image wilt restore ;
Then, from every bond set free,
Lord ! Thy glory I shall see.”

C. R.

2 TIM. I. 12.

"I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day."

NOW calm and tranquil was the spirit that dictated these words,—how full of joyful anticipation! And, under what circumstances were they penned? Not in the morning of life, when hope sheds her brightest radiance,—not in the full vigour of manhood, when death appears still far distant. No; the hand of Time was upon the great apostle. He was about to lay his hoary head upon the block, and to terminate his long and faithful ministry,—his unexampled labours and sufferings for the cross of Christ,—amid the cruel agonies of martyrdom. From that eventful hour, when the dazzling light from heaven shone upon his pathway, year after year had been devoted to the service of Him whose religion he had sought so eagerly to

extirpate, and every year had seen him more ardent and zealous,—bolder and more abundant in labours. If we want to know what his life was, we have only to turn to the 11th chap. of 2d Cor., “Of the Jews received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned,” &c. *That* was his daily, outward life ; yet we shall greatly mistake the life of that glorious apostle if we suppose it to have been a gloomy and unhappy one. It was filled with blessedness,—the blessedness which arises from inward peace, from communion with God in Christ, and from self-sacrifice and consecration to His service. But, we notice chiefly the fact, that it is no beginner who utters these hopeful words. No ; it is Paul, “the aged,”—Paul, bending beneath the burden of many years,—the veteran spiritual warrior ; for he tells us, “I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.” It was thus, at the close of life’s journey,—on the very brink of the Jordan, when its dark waters were rushing by his side,—that he encouraged the young Timothy, feeble in constitution, whom he so tenderly loved as his son in the gospel :—who was *entering* into the service

from which he was about to be *removed*, and who was exposed to the perils and hardships from which he was escaping, "to watch in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, and make full proof of his ministry." It was at this momentous crisis, that his faith approved itself,—not the leaf, driven by the tempest,—not the reed, shaken with the wind,—but an oak, more deeply rooted, by the raging blasts of a thousand storms, and unmoved, when the last mighty whirlwinds were sweeping through its branches. He stands before us, in the attitude of calm Christian assurance, with the fire of heaven lighting up his eye, even while the chain of persecution is fretting his aged frame, and the fire or sword of martyrdom is waiting for its prey. The shades of eventide are beginning to gather, but the gleam of a brighter sky is seen beyond, and, with the assured conviction, that the object of his life is fully accomplished, these are his impressive words, "I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day." We may imagine him in his lonely, gloomy cell, reviewing his past

eventful life, casting his eye on the perilous path he had traversed, and on the Ebenezers with which it was marked. He seems to say, "Time was when I had other hopes and prospects,—when another ground of confidence was mine,—when, if I had trusted in the world's promises, I had a brilliant prospect before me—wealth, honour, fame : all these were the gilded toys which urged me onward ; but, another vision was presented,—*Jesus*, whom I persecuted, spake to me. His service was void of all earthly honour ; I had nought to anticipate but suffering and shame,—the bitter hostility of foes,—the unkind desertion of friends,—I had sinful habits to break,—guilty passions to subdue, and countless dangers to brave,—but He said unto me, 'My grace is sufficient for thee, and my strength is made perfect in weakness.' I took Him at His word,—I embraced Him as my Saviour,—I placed myself at His disposal, 'Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do ?' Though of sinners the very chief, He welcomed me ; and, then I learned the depth and sincerity of His love,—the strength and security of His friendship ; then I learned the deep enormity of sin,—so stern and crushing, that it bowed

down a Head of spotless innocence ; then I learned that, had I stood alone upon the earth,—the God-man must have wrestled, and toiled, and wept, and died, to preserve *me* from sinking beneath the vengeance of Heaven, and from being stricken by the wrath of the Almighty. I beheld my sins through the bleeding wounds of my Saviour, and realised my own share in the dark tragedy of Calvary. Faith brought Christ into my heart, and I believed on the Son of God. He told me at the outset, that I would have the flesh to crucify, and corruption to mortify,—that I would have a battle to fight, enemies to conquer, a wilderness to traverse, and a race to run. And I have found His every word come true,—the warning and the promise, the danger and deliverance, the toil and the tranquillity, the outward suffering and the inward calm ; and *now* I declare, as with my dying breath, that my estimate of Jesus has undergone no change,—that what I said, in prospect of trial and suffering for His sake, I am still ready to say,—*now* that the trial, fierce and fiery as it is, has been partly undergone, and even now is at its sharpest. For His cause

suffer these things, 'nevertheless, I am not ashamed.' He is still my all in all,—the Faithful and True. 'God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of Christ.' 'I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.' I have entrusted my soul to Him, and I am persuaded that it is safe in His keeping. I am not making a plunge into eternity in the dark,—I am not flinging myself into the fires of martyrdom blindfold; but I have weighed the grounds of my conviction,—I have looked at the soundness of the Rock, to see whether it will bear me,—I have tasted that 'the Lord is gracious,' and, therefore, 'am confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in me will perform it until the day of Christ.'"

Oh, strong assurance! most comforting persuasion! Christian! do *you* desire to have the same confidence in Jesus in a *dying* hour? Then *live* to Jesus as did the apostle. Give Him your confidence, your love,—and He will prove Himself faithful to the end. It

may not be, that you shall exhibit the same strong faith, or give expression to the same feelings of unshaken reliance on the Saviour, but you *will* have peace, you *will* have security. Let the shadows gather round you, dark and gloomy,—let the night close in upon your weary footsteps, threatening and tempestuous,—still the eye of faith will discover the Soul-guardian,—the Treasure-keeper,—the Friend that sticketh closer than any brother. Do you long for the grace of *assurance*?—do you feel, at times, a doubt of your soul's safety? So did the apostle. He dreaded, lest “after having preached to others, he himself should be a castaway.” Assurance is not a grace given to the believer, and never again weakened or removed. His experience is varied, his journey is not all sunshine. There are times of cloud, and storm, and tempest,—yea, even when his heart is glad and joyous,—when, with a holy rapture, he can exclaim, “Thou hast anointed mine head with oil, and made my cup to run over,” there are unseen yet powerful agencies at work, to depress and sadden his soul. To-day, he is bold and ardent,—to-morrow, weak and feeble; to-day, he real-

izes the assurance, "I have blotted out thy transgressions as a cloud, and thine iniquities as a thick cloud from before me;"—to-morrow, he is sunk in the very depths of despondency, and cries out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Long years of training and discipline are needed, ere the Christian can hope to take up the language of the great apostle. —But, fear not, trembling one!—Still "cast your burden on the Lord, and He will sustain you," still cling to the assurance, "I will not leave thee nor forsake thee." Oh! look back, on the page of your experience, as did the apostle, and "be not afraid." See, your pilgrimage-path, studded thick with Eben-ezers, testifying to your Saviour's faithfulness and mercy. Think of His manifold gracious interpositions in the past,—sustaining you in trial, supporting you in perplexity, helping you, when vain was the help of man. Take these things as the pledges of faithfulness in the future, and let this ever be your prayer:—

"Lord, give me grace to trust Thee at all times,—in joy and in sorrow,—in sickness and in health,—and, in Thy good time, en-

able me truly to say with Thy servant of old,
'I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day.' "

" The leaves around me falling,
Are preaching of decay ;
The hollow winds are calling,
'Come, pilgrim, come away !'
The day, in night declining,
Says, 'I must too decline ;'
The year, its life resigning,
Its lot foreshadows mine.

" The light my path surrounding,
The loves to which I cling,
The hopes within me bounding,
The joys that round me wing ;
All melt, like stars of even,
Before the morning's ray,
Pass upwards into heaven,
And chide at my delay.

" The friends gone there before me,
Are calling from on high,
And joyous angels o'er me,
Tempt sweetly to the sky.
'Why wait ?' they say, 'and whither,
'Mid scenes of death and sin ?
Oh, rise to glory hither,
And find true life begin.'

" I hear the invitation,
And fain would rise and come,
A sinner to salvation,
An exile to his home.

ASSURANCE.

But while I here must linger,
Thus, thus, let all I see
Point on, with faithful finger,
To heaven, O Lord, and Thee."

H. F. LYTE.

" Lord, when we bend before Thy throne,
And our confessions pour,
Teach us to *feel* the sins we *own*,
And *shun* what we *deplore*.

" Our contrite spirits pitying see,
And penitence impart ;
And let a healing ray from Thee
Beam hope upon the heart.

" When we disclose our wants in prayer,
May we our wills resign ;
And not a thought our bosoms share,
Which is not wholly Thine.

" Let faith each meek petition fill,
And waft it to the skies ;
And teach our hearts 'tis goodness still
That grants it or denies."

Carefulness.

ISA. xl. 11.

“He shall feed his flock like a shepherd : he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.”

ISA. xlii. 3.

“A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench : he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.”

JOHN xv. 9.

“As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you : continue ye in my love.”

PS. xxxiii. 18.

“Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy.”

ZECH. ii. 8.

“For thus saith the Lord of hosts, After the glory hath he sent me unto the nations which spoiled you : for he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye.”

MATT. x. 30.

“But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.”

LUKE xxi. 18.

“But there shall not an hair of your head perish.”

" Holy Saviour, Friend unseen,
Since on Thine arm Thou bidst me lean,
Help me throughout life's varying scene,
By faith to cling to Thee !

" Without a murmur, I dismiss
My former dreams of earthly bliss ;
My joy, my consolation this,
Each hour to cling to Thee !

" Though faith and hope awhile be tried,
I ask not, need not, aught beside ;
How safe, how calm, how satisfied,
The soul that clings to Thee !

" They fear not Satan, or the grave,
They feel Thee near, and strong to save,
Nor fear to cross o'er Jordan's wave,
Because they cling to Thee !

" Blest is my lot, whate'er befall ;
What can disturb me, what appal,
Whilst as my Rock, my strength, my all,
Saviour, I cling to Thee !"

1 COR. vii. 32.

"But I would have you without carefulness."

MATT. vi. 34.

"Take no thought for the morrow : the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof."



WE associate the Saviour's injunction and the apostle's wish together, because both set before us the same great truth, and indicate the same line of Christian conduct. Let not these words be misunderstood. Neither the Saviour nor His apostle would desire men to be "without carefulness" in regard to their highest, their eternal interests. The words are applicable only to believers,—to those who have been led to look for pardon, peace, and safety in Christ the Redeemer ; and, what is meant by carefulness is not prudent attention, but *anxious, corroding* care ; and our Lord enjoins, not the suppression of forethought, but the diverting it from temporal things, in order that it might be fixed on

things eternal. Indeed, He commended forethought ; for, in the preceding verse He had said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness." And, what is this but demanding forethought ? inasmuch as it is a demand, that men make provision for the future,—for that state of existence which is never to terminate.

Both the verses, then, have reference to the carefulness of *over-anxiety*, but not to the carefulness of *prudence*. Indeed, God has placed us under such a dispensation, that the literal dismissal of all carefulness could lead to nothing but ruin and wretchedness. The literal dismissal of all thought for the morrow would involve the neglecting the culture of the soil,—we should cease to sow, and, therefore, we should starve ; it would involve the neglect of those remedies which are needful for the preservation of health,—neglect of making provision for a time of sickness and of old age. The artisan,—the labourer, would live only for the day, and leave the morrow to shift for itself. No ; this *never* could be our Saviour's meaning. It is the *part* of godly care, to labour honestly and earnestly, in the calling in which God has

placed us ; to use all lawful and innocent means to obtain a competent livelihood ; and to be thankful that our heavenly Father has enabled us, by patient painstaking, or even by hard and toilsome labour, to earn our daily bread. This godly care is praiseworthy and unexceptionable. The care about which we are warned is of a very different nature,—it is an over-anxious, distrustful care. There is such a thing, on the one hand, as diligently using the means, and then calmly leaving the issue with God ; there is such a thing, on the other, as making use of the means, and then being disquieted with restless apprehensions as to the issue. The former is what Scripture enjoins ; the latter is what Scripture forbids. It is the duty of the husbandman, in obedience to the ordinance of God, to prepare the land, and cast in the seed ; but, having done this, it is equally his duty to trust God, that his labours will be blest, and to dismiss all anxiety as to the result. He would sin were he to omit carefulness in regard of tilling the ground and scattering the seed ; but he sins also if, after having made the appointed preparation, he is fretful and fearful in regard of his crops. The

former sin would be that of presumption, the latter that of distrust. Means *are* to be used. God has placed them within our reach ; but, beyond that, we are utterly powerless. And yet, how many thousands, from day to day, live on in a perpetual fever of anxiety,—scheming and planning for the future, as if *they* themselves could turn the current of events. Mark the furrows on the brow,—listen to the eager inquiry,—see the restless running to and fro,—the setting aside, sometimes the total disregard, of higher and nobler interests, for the things of time. Now, it is this carking care, this wearing solicitude, this absorbing desire to accumulate, which is forbidden by Christ, and is inconsistent with a true and lively faith ; and, to a child of God, surely this ought to suffice,—he is utterly *powerless* over to-morrow. It may bring with it altered thoughts, diverted purposes, deranged schemes, and, therefore, *must* virtually think for itself,—seeing that we cannot think for it to-day. And, are we not under the watchful eye of a Father in heaven, who has promised to provide that the morrow shall bring with it all needful supplies? Powerless over to-morrow we undoubtedly are, and

therefore should be "without carefulness." It will be time enough to meet its trials when those trials come; and if we are His, we may rest assured, that when they come, they shall not be unattended by the grace required for Christian endurance. Our Lord's meaning most certainly is, that His disciples should give heed to the duties of to-day,—in the sure and certain hope, that He will communicate strength for the morrow. There is no truth which ought more deeply to impress the believer's mind than this, that God will give grace and strength to do or to bear, as the occasion may require, commensurate with our wants. It is not God's procedure to give to-day the strength for to-morrow,—this would but weaken our sense of dependence on Him, and induce forgetfulness that of ourselves we have no sufficiency, whether for duties or trials. But it *is* God's procedure to provide that the communications of His grace shall always be adequate for the wants of His people,—that if not made *before* they are actually needed, they are *never* actually needed *without* being made.

Besides, let us remember, that for the future we are in one sense not responsible.

God's commands are *now*—"Go, work *to-day* in My vineyard." "*To-day*, if ye will hear His voice," &c. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." And of this we may be well assured, that *that* man will have little scope for solicitude about to-morrow, who shall perform conscientiously and diligently, what ought to be the duties of to-day; and, if we are tempted, (as we often are,) to become weary in well-doing, let it be borne in mind, that just in proportion as a man diminishes his duties, he will be sure to increase his anxieties. And further, to-morrow will be in nowise injured *when it comes*, by the preference of to-day,—for, the best of all preparations for impending trial, is to be diligent in the observance of present duty.

Christian! be it yours to act your part well *to-day*, and you will find, that, bring what it may, to-morrow will bring the needed strength along with it. The task, which, if it were prescribed to you *now*, would fill your heart with despair, has only to become a duty, and it will appear easy. Have you not found it so in the past? Obstacles which seemed at a distance almost insurmountable, were found, when approached, to be easily over-

come ; not that in reality they became less,—the mountain was as high as it seemed,—but God, mindful of your weakness, imparted strength to surmount it,—He gave power to overleap it. Oh ! never, believer, if you really trust your God, and meekly leave events in His hands, never will you find that to-morrow brings with it more of *trial* than of *strength*. Why do you look with alarm to the future ? The almighty Disposer of all events,—thy *Father*,—holds in His hands the balances, in which are weighed grace and trial,—strength will be imparted when thou requirest it,—patience will be given thee when the hour of suffering comes, and the promise be made good, “My God shall supply *all* your need.” Believe it, Christian ! from the unknown depths of the future there can come up no trouble, unaccompanied by its appropriate consolation,—no enemy at whose side there is not an antagonist,—no loss which does not bring with it a counterbalancing gain. You can at least say,—“ If I know not what to-morrow will bring, I know that my heavenly Father orders all events,—it is His to order its occurrences, His to proportion its duties and difficulties, and I will trust in

Him, and not be afraid." The man of the world *may* with good cause dread to-morrow, for he has nothing to assure him, that the sun will not rise on withered hopes and blighted plans. To him, the future is one dark, dreary uncertainty,—he knows no hand in it,—he can discover no love in it,—he can see no guardian over it,—and, no marvel, if it appear to him as a troubled sea, from whose dark waters rise boding and menacing forms. But, it ought not so to be with thee, O Christian ! Thy Father's hand is overruling and controlling all for thy final good. The storm may be gathering ; even now there may be signals of its approach,—the moaning of the wind and the gathering of the clouds. What then ? Who is it, believer, that brings the winds out of His treasures, and hath His way in the whirlwind and the storm ? Fear not, then, neither be afraid. Many troubles may surround you,—many dangers may threaten you,—your hearth may become dreary and desolate, and every earthly comfort be removed,—still, amid all these outward ills, anchor thy soul on the sure word of promise,—“ I am with you alway, even to the end ; ” and let this be your prayer :—

“O Lord, give me Thy heavenly grace,
that I may cast all my care upon Thee,
knowing that Thou carest for me ; and, by
whatever path Thou leadest me, oh ! save
me from all doubt of Thy love, and bring me
closer to Thyself.”

“ Though some good things of lower worth
My heart is call'd on to resign,
Of all the gifts in heaven and earth,
The best, the very best is mine :
The love of God in Christ made known,
The love that is enough alone,
My Father's love is all my own.

“ My soul's Restorer, let me learn
In that deep love to live and rest ;
Let me the precious thing discern
Of which I am indeed possess'd :
My treasure let me feel and see,
And let my moments, as they flee,
Unfold my endless life in Thee.

“ Let me not dwell so much within
My wounded heart with anxious heed,
Where all my searches meet with sin,
And nothing satisfies my need ;
It shuts me from the sound and sight
Of that pure world of life and light
Which has nor breadth, nor length, nor height

“ Let me Thy power, Thy beauty see ;
So shall my vain aspiring cease,
And my free heart shall follow Thee
Through paths of everlasting peace :

My strength Thy gift, my life Thy care,
I shall forget to seek elsewhere
The joy to which my soul is heir.

“ I was not call'd to walk alone,
To clothe myself with love and light ;
And for Thy glory, not my own,
My soul is precious in Thy sight :
My evil heart can never be
A home, a heritage for me ;
But Thou canst make it fit for Thee.”

A. L. WARING.

“ When waves of trouble round me swell,
My soul, be not dismay'd ;
But hear a Voice thou know'st full well—
“Tis I, be not afraid.”

“ When black the threat'ning clouds appear,
And storms my path invade,
That Voice shall tranquillise each fear—
“Tis I, be not afraid.”

“ There is a gulf that must be cross'd,
Saviour ! be near to aid ;
Whisper, when my frail bark is toss'd—
“Tis I, be not afraid.”

“ There is a dark and fearful vale,
Death hides within its shade ;
Oh ! say, when flesh and heart shall fail—
“Tis I, be not afraid.”

Abiding with God.

EXOD. xix. 5.

"Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine."

DEUT. vii. 12.

"Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the Lord thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he sware unto thy fathers."

DEUT. xi. 27.

"A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day."

DEUT. xxx. 15, 16.

"See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; in that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it."

1 JOHN ii. 6.

"He that saith he *abideth* in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked."

PSALM l. 23.

"Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God."

MATT. xii. 50.

"For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

“Thou high and lofty One, afar
Beyond creation's farthest star,
Inhabiting eternity,—the high
And holy palace of the sky;
Oh ! am I not too low for Thee
To stoop to visit, and to *dwell* with me ?
A still, small whisper answers, No,
His chosen dwelling is below ;
Within the contrite sinner's breast,
'Mid tears, and sighs, He loves to rest ;
And they who tremble at His word,
In praise and supplication, shall be heard.”

1 COR. vii. 24.

“Brethren, let every man wherein he is called therein
abide with God.”



UCH was St Paul's memorable decision in reply to certain questions proposed to him by the Church of Corinth. It had become matter of doubt with the early converts,—who were few in number, and thinly scattered throughout society,—who were, besides, exposed to much and bitter persecution from their relatives and neighbours,—what was the true line of Christian conduct. Was the believing wife to forsake the unbelieving husband? or the believing husband to forsake the unbelieving wife? Was the believing child to desert the unbelieving parent?—the believing slave to sever all connexion with an unbelieving master? Were they to break asunder all family and social ties—to form themselves into a separate and distinct community, and live apart from the world's society,

—presenting a united front to the world's persecutions? The apostle says, "No; Christianity was never intended to interfere with existing relationships; it was no part of the religion of Christ to alter the forms of civil government. On the contrary, it even set itself to the support of existing institutions, by requiring of its disciples that they should be content, whatever their condition." Christian men were to remain in those relationships in which they were, and *in* them to develop the inward spirituality of the Christian life. No doubt, Christianity *would* gradually tell upon the politics, as well as the morals of a land. It would, if thoroughly followed out, abolish war and slavery, and every form of oppression; but not by exciting prejudice, or attempting to overturn existing institutions. The slave, who had with joy embraced a religion which taught the worth and dignity of the human soul,—a religion which declared that rich and poor, peer and peasant, master and slave, were equal in the sight of God,—the slave, who had come to know that there *was* such a thing as brotherhood and Christian equality, and who might thus be tempted and excited to throw off the cruel and oppres-

sive yoke *by force*, was not taught to labour for the acquisition of his freedom. No ; but he was told of a higher feeling,—a feeling that would make him free, even with the chain and shackle upon his limbs. He was told of the possibility of being a high and lofty Christian, even though in bondage,—told of his true dignity as a *man*, as a child of God, an heir of glory. Were he to have his choice, then, indeed, St Paul bids him prefer liberty. But the great Christian rule was this, “Let every man wherein he is called therein abide with God.”

Now, this great truth cannot be too frequently insisted upon, that it matters not what a Christian’s walk in life may be, he has opportunities, if he only take advantage of them, of truly serving and honouring his Divine Master. And, one great reason why religion does not advance more rapidly, may be found in this, that Christian men and women, albeit they are earnest and sincere, do not realise the fact, that they *can* labour for God, and advance His cause, even in the midst of the most common and menial occupations,—that Christianity does not call a man *away from* his occupation or residence ;

but *in* these to adorn the doctrine of God his Saviour in all things. The Saviour likened His kingdom to good seed. It was to spring up and grow, raising up other plants to scatter forth seed also, until the whole land should become one fruitful field. He likened it to a grain of mustard seed,—the least of all seeds,—which, when it is grown, becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. He likened it to leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened. It was by the leaven coming into contact with the meal that the whole became leavened ; and so the followers of Christ, coming into contact with the children of the world, are to commend His religion, and spread its influence wider, by their pure, earnest, and Christlike temper and bearing. Their daily lives, so to speak, are to be perpetual pleadings with man for God ; and, by exhibiting the softening power of Christ's grace, by holding up the mirror of a life bright with purity and love and goodness, they are to attract those around them, and win them to the Saviour,—they are to let their “light so shine before men, that they,

seeing their good works, may glorify their Father in heaven."

It is true that, in every age, some have imagined that religion *must* best thrive in retirement, far from the din and bustle of the world,—that, in some convent's quiet gloom, away from the dwellings of care-worn men, the soul would rise into more intimate communion with its God, and the Christian graces expand, and flourish, and come to maturity. But *experience* has proved all this to be fancy. The growth of character which is there promoted is stunted and unhealthy. Outward temptations *may* be avoided ; but, from the sinful heart there is *no* escape. The eye may never gaze on the world's wealth and grandeur, and, by penance and fasting, the body may be bruised and broken ; but, to the eye of the soul, other and equally seductive pleasures may be presented, and, while the flesh is writhing beneath the lash, the heart may be lifted up with spiritual pride, and the faith of the enthusiast be a faith on works, and not on Christ. Besides, the world is our *appointed* sphere of action ; there, we are not merely to cease to do evil, but learn to do well ; there.

we are to be proof *against* temptation, and to fight the good fight ; there, we are to maintain, not a negative, but a positive character ; and, as the servants of Christ, we are to be blameless, not through freedom *from* temptation, but through overcoming it by His imparted grace. Christian ! you are called to carry your religion *into* the world ; and, in the performance even of its meanest and most trivial duties, to serve God. You are to strive by His help to “make a bad world better ;” and, so to live in it, that men may honour you, and, when you die, that they may miss you. Think not, that yours is a calling in which you cannot “abide with God.” If it is lawful, however humble it may be, therein you may conform to the apostolic injunction, and be a faithful and diligent servant of Christ. It is as much the appointment and fixed ordinance of God that you should labour for your daily bread, as that you should worship Him in the house of prayer,—as much His appointment that you should engage in the business of the world, and be diligent in your week-day employments, as that you should prayerfully study His holy Word, and assemble your house-

hold around the family altar. There needs nothing but that the occupation be lawful in itself, and pursued with that sobriety of mind, and that humble dependence upon God, which prove that you are not burying the future in the present, or relying on your own efforts ; and, forasmuch as you are submitting to an ordinance of God, you may be, and if not false to yourself, you actually are, engaged in a work of obedience to your heavenly Father, and therein you may “abide with God.” The merchant, as he is busy in his schemes of speculation,—the tradesman, in the harassing cares and occupations of each day of trade,—the cottager, in providing for the wants of his family,—all these, in their several stations,—however homely may be their occupation, however mean the service in which they have to engage,—may enter upon it, and may discharge it, in the spirit of the Lord, “whose meat and drink it was to do the will of God.” Yes ; and all these are as much living unto God for His glory, and as diligently and actually labouring with a view to their eternal wellbeing, as the minister who is called to stand up and plead with his fellow-men for

God, for souls, and for eternity, or when carrying comfort to a sick-bed, and delivering the message of peace to the dying believer.

Reader ! be active, be industrious, be diligent in your ordinary pursuits. This is your Father's will. Be an example of blameless integrity and of self-denying benevolence,—be faithful in the discharge of all the duties which are lawfully required of you, belonging to the station which God's providence has called you to fill. Do all this from a purer and a higher principle than worldlings do it, on the high principle of approving yourself to your "Father in heaven." Do it with a view to glorify God on earth,—that the religion you profess may be honoured,—that Christ may be glorified,—that the cause of the gospel may be advanced. Whilst you aim, as you may lawfully aim, at success in the business of *this* life, never forget that your birthright is *eternal* life,—that heaven is the home for which you are summoned to prepare,—that immortality is the prize for which you ought to be seeking. And be this your prayer :—

“O God, Thou who alone workest in Thy people, both to will and to do of Thy good pleasure, grant me grace, at all times, to abide with Thee. In all my wanderings here upon the earth, may I seek Thy glory, and steadfastly look up to heaven as my eternal home.”

“Abide with me ! fast falls the eventide ;
The darkness thickens ;—Lord, with me abide.
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me.

“Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day ;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away ;
Change and decay in all around I see ;
O Thou, who changest not, abide with me.

“Not a brief glance, I beg, a passing word ;
But as Thou dwell'st with Thy disciples, Lord,
Familiar, condescending, patient, free,
Come, not to sojourn, but abide with me.

“Come, not in terrors, as the King of kings,
But kind and good, with healing in Thy wings,
Tears for all woes, a heart for every plea,—
Come, Friend of sinners, and thus bide with me.

“Thou on my head in early youth didst smile,
And, though rebellious and perverse meanwhile,
Thou hast not left me, oft as I left Thee ;
On to the close, O Lord, abide with me.”

H. F. LYTEL.

- " Why thus longing, thus for ever sighing,
For the far off, unattain'd and dim,
While the beautiful, all round thee lying,
Offers up its low, perpetual hymn ?
- " Wouldst thou listen to its gentle teaching,
All the restless yearnings it would still ;
Leaf and flower, and laden bee, are preaching,
Thine own sphere, though humble, first to fill.
- " Poor indeed thou must be, if around thee
Thou no ray of light and joy canst throw ;
If no silken cord of love hath bound thee
To some little world through weal and woe :
- " If no dear eyes thy fond love can brighten,
No fond voices answer to thine own ;
If no brother's sorrow thou canst lighten,
By daily sympathy and gentle tone.
- " Not by deeds that the crowd applauds,
Not by works that give the world renown,
Not by martyrdom, or vaunted crosses,
Canst thou win and wear the immortal crown.
- " Daily struggling, though enclosed and lonely,
Every day a rich reward will give ;
Thou wilt find, by hearty striving, only,
And truly loving, thou canst truly live."

ANON.

Gratitude.

1 SAM. ii. 30.

"Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith, I said indeed, that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever : but now the Lord saith, Be it far from me ; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed."

PROV. iii. 9, 10.

"Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase : so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine."

PSALM xcii. 1.

"It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High."

PSALM cxxxv. 3.

"Praise the Lord ; for the Lord is good : sing praises unto his name ; for it is pleasant."

2 COR. ix. 6, 7.

"But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly ; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give ; not grudgingly, or of necessity : for God loveth a cheerful giver."

2 COR. viii. 12.

"For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not."

1 TIM. vi. 17-19.

"Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy ; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate ; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."

" King of glory, King of peace,
I will love Thee ;
And that love may never cease,
I will move Thee.

" Thou hast granted my request,
Thou hast heard me ;
Thou didst note my working breast,
Thou hast spared me.

" Wherefore with my utmost art
I will sing Thee ;
And the cream of all my heart
I will bring Thee.


" Though my sins against me cried,
Thou didst clear me ;
And alone when they replied,
Thou didst hear me.

" Small it is in this poor sort
To enrol Thee ;
E'en eternity's too short
To extol thee !"

HERBERT.

PSALM cxvi. 12.

“What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits?”

HE Christian, as he journeys onwards in the pathway of life, ought frequently to look back, and standing, as it were, on the shadowy side of the hill, review the way by which God has led him. If we would keep alive our gratitude,—if we would have it to increase more and more, till, like a holy flame, it burn within us,—we must often in thought, retrace the varied turnings and windings of our earthly pilgrimage. We are so prone, amid our daily duties and our converse with the world, to forget and overlook the benefits received, that only by a careful and frequent retrospect, can we continue, from day to day, cherishing a spirit of true and ever-increasing thankfulness to God. But, the oftener we make the review, the greater cause will we have for saying, with David, “Who am I, O

Lord God, and what is my father's host that Thou hast brought me hitherto?"

Christian! you cannot indeed reckon *all* the benefits you have received from the hand of God,—for they are numerous as the stars of heaven or the drops of the mighty ocean. Your *common* mercies,—alas! too lightly valued,—the air you breathe,—the return of the gladsome sunlight,—the succession of the seasons,—and the quiet and gentle stillness and repose of night,—all these, with their unnumbered host of attendant blessings, are scattered on your path. But, select a few of the benefits you have received, if only to awaken fresh gratitude. You have enjoyed, it may be, years of unbroken health,—or, if you have been visited by sickness, you have been, through God's infinite mercy, restored. While others have been tossing for weary months upon the bed of languishing, and many been hurried into eternity, as in the suddenness of a moment, unprepared and impenitent,—you are still in the land of the living and the place of hope. Look into the full graves around you,—think of the myriad sick-beds, with their suffering tenants, and, surely the language of the Psalm-

ist is yours, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits?"

Consider, too, your *family* mercies. To some who read these pages, the past may have brought bereavement and sorrow. It must be so, in this ever-changing world,—

"The air is full of farewells to the dying,
And mournings for the dead."

But, there are others who have been spared such sorrows. Reader! your wife, your children, are this day by your side,—the family hearth has been unbroken, the family circle undiminished,—diseases, which have thinned the ranks of other little groups, and darted the arrow into other family bands, have passed by your door. Or, if some are absent from you, having gone forth into the world to fight the battle of life, you have reason to hope that they are well, and are prospering in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call them, and, in thus preserving these loved ones, have you not had cause to mark the good hand of an all-wise and watchful Providence, secretly and wonderfully working for your happiness and comfort?

Reflect, too on the manifold *spiritual* mer-

cies you have enjoyed,—mercies, from so many withheld,—the Word of God in your home,—the house of God to repair to,—the means of grace,—the hallowed rest of the Sabbath,—seasons of holy communion,—times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. Think, too, of the communications of grace from above,—comforting, sustaining, preventing grace,—grace for the family and the closet, the church, and the world,—and, will you not again say, “What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits?” Christian! let us help you to give an answer to the question. If you are truly grateful, you will *love the Lord*. This is the *best* return you can make for His innumerable blessings,—His unmerited favours,—it is what He chiefly demands, without which, all other returns are valueless and of no account. This is “the first and great commandment,”—the sum and substance of all religious and grateful obedience, that we “love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our strength, and with all our mind.”

If you are truly grateful to God, you will *honour Him with your hope and trust*,—you

will *make Him the object of devout address and prayer for time to come.* In nothing does God declare Himself more honoured by His children, than in being regarded with firm trust and confidence,—and, not only is it true, that the *more* we ask, the *more* we shall receive,—but the *oftener* we ask, the more readily and cheerfully will the blessing be bestowed. Nothing is more pleasing and delightful to Him who is the Fountain of all grace, than to have humble, trusting souls coming to His footstool, and, by earnest prayers offered up in faith, drawing forth out of the inexhaustible stores of His bounty, what they stand in need of, to strengthen them for daily duty, or to support them under painful trial.

If you are truly grateful to God for His benefits, you will strive *to walk before Him in the land of the living.* It will be your effort to serve God in all the duties of a sincere and exemplary,—of a holy and grateful obedience. You will make the pious regularity of your life, testify your sincere and unfeigned gratitude. You will endeavour to maintain always on your mind, a lively sense of His abiding presence, in order that you

may make it your chief and constant care, to approve yourself in His sight.

If you are truly grateful, you will be careful to *pay your vows unto the Lord*. Such was the resolution of the Psalmist, and, surely, it is an indispensable return for the countless benefits received. Reader! here there is much room for heart-searching,—the promise, made upon a sick-bed, where is its fulfilment? the resolution, formed when the star of hope again glimmered on your pathway, where is it now? the secret purpose, awakened in the soul by some providential deliverance, has it ever reached its accomplishment?

Finally, gratitude to God for His benefits, *will tend to increase your delight in His service*. Your gratitude and obedience are sure to rise and fall together. Gratitude to God for benefits received, recommends us to His favour, and ensures the bestowal of others yet more precious and soul-satisfying. Gratitude keeps His hand ever open,—dispensing His gifts yet more profusely. Christian! be this then your prayer:—

“O God, endue me with a spirit of true

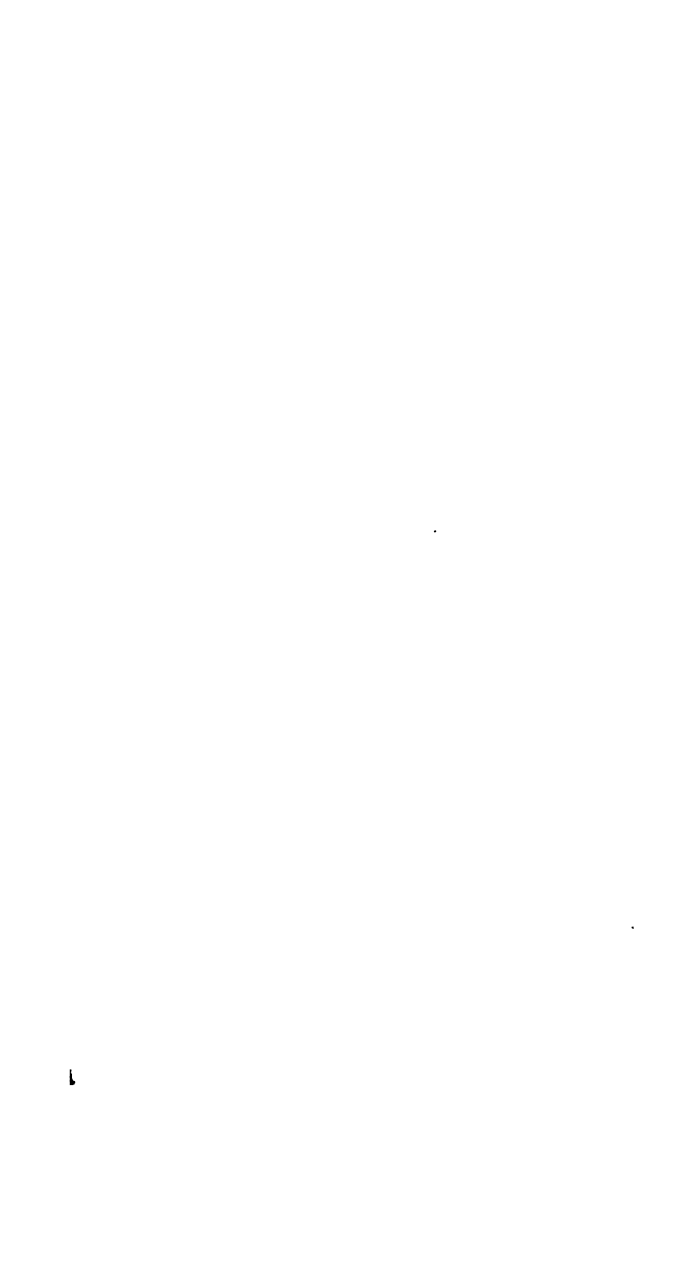
and pious gratitude for all Thy benefits, temporal and spiritual; maintain and increase the same in my heart. Grant me the blessing of a thankful spirit, and dispose me ever to take delight in Thy service."

"And wilt Thou now forget me, Lord?
Oh, no! it cannot be;
No earthly tongue can ever tell
What Thou hast been to me.

"Through all the chequer'd scenes of life
Thy love hath shelter'd me;
And wilt Thou now forsake Thy child?
Oh, no! it cannot be.

"In life, or death, I take my stand,
Where I have ever stood,
Beneath the shelter of Thy cross,
And trusting in Thy blood.

"And there, when youth, and health, and strength,
And energy have fled,
The shades of evening peacefully
Shall close around my head."



Prayer.

ZECH. xii. 10.

“And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.”

ROM. viii. 15, 26, 27.

“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

GAL. iv. 6.

“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”

PSALM x. 17.

“Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear.”

JOHN xvi. 24.

“Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.”

- " Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
 Utter'd or unexpress'd,
 The motion of a hidden fire
 That trembles in the breast.
- ' Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
 The falling of a tear,
 The upward glancing of an eye
 When none but God is near.
- " Prayer is the simplest form of speech
 That infant lips can try ;
 Prayer, the sublimest strains that reach
 The Majesty on high.
- " Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
 The Christian's native air,
 His watchword at the gates of death,—
 He enters heaven with prayer.
- " Prayer is the contrite sinner's voice,
 Returning from his ways ;
 While angels in their songs rejoice,
 And say, ' Behold, he prays !'
- " The saints, in prayer, appear as one,
 In word, and deed, and mind,
 When with the Father and the Son
 Their fellowship they find.
- " Nor prayer is made on earth alone,—
 The Holy Spirit pleads ;
 And Jesus, on th' eternal throne,
 For sinners intercedes.
- " O Thou, by whom we come to God,
 The Life, the Truth, the Way,
 The path of prayer Thyself hast trod ;
 Lord, teach us how to pray."

MONTGOMERY.

HEB. iv. 16.

"Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

TO the Christian pilgrim, no promises are more encouraging, than those which assure him of an answer to believing prayer. His times of need are so numerous,—his wants so pressing,—his hours of anxiety and fear so frequent, that this thought alone sustains his soul, "I have a prayer-hearing and a prayer-answering God." Is it a time of prosperity? then he has *need* to pray, "Lord, suffer me not to forget Thee." Is it a time of adversity? then he has need to pray, "Lord, let me not be forgotten of Thee." Is it a time of health? then he has need to pray, "Lord, give me grace to use it for Thy glory." Is it a time of sickness? then he has need to pray, "Lord, make me patient and submissive to Thy will." At all times, indeed,—even when no words

are uttered,—when imploring no special blessing from on high,—the Christian ought to cherish the *spirit* of prayer. That time, assuredly, is the time of *sorest* need, when no want is felt, and no desire is cherished for a yet larger increase of grace and strength. True, times there often are in the Christian life, when doubt and unbelief restrain the utterance of prayer,—when the consciousness of unworthiness causes the soul to “stand afar off.” But, in such a case, there is a gracious promise,—“The Spirit helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered.” Yes, in the plenitude of His grace and tenderness, *He* unfolds Jesus to the soul, as being all that it wanteth, to give it full and free and near access to God. *He* removes the eye from off self, and fastens it upon the blood that pleads louder for mercy, than all the believer’s sins can plead for condemnation. He draws to the throne of grace, and points to the all-prevailing Intercessor,—ready to present the petition, and urge its acceptance, and plead for its answer, on the basis of His own infinite and atoning merits.

Christian! let this ever be your encouragement, in drawing near to God. Jesus at His right hand,—Jesus is the door. Coming through Him,—all-guilty in yourself, and undeserving,—you may approach the throne of grace, and ask what you will.

Remember, it is the throne of *grace*. Just the throne we want. We are the poor, the needy, the helpless, the vile, the sinful, the unworthy. Nothing have we to bring, but our deep wretchedness and poverty,—nothing, but our complaints, our miseries, our groanings, our sighs and tears. But, it is the throne of *grace*. For just such is it erected. It is set up in a world of woe,—in the midst of the wilderness,—in the very land of the enemy,—in the vale of tears,—*because* it is the throne of grace. It is a God of grace who sits upon it, and all the blessings He dispenses from it are the bestowments of grace. Pardon, justification, adoption, peace, comfort, light, direction,—all, all is of free, unmerited *grace*.

And, O Christian! remember also, *this throne is ever nigh at hand*. You have not to travel far to reach it. No lengthy and painful journey,—no wearisome and morti-

lying pilgrimage. Lying down or rising up,—going out or coming in,—in the streets or in the house,—in public or in private,—in the chamber or in the sanctuary, we may lift up our heart to the Lord, assured that our cry shall be heard; and, if good for us, our request shall be granted. “And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear,” (Isa. lxv. 24.) The hand, outstretched in prayer, is a hand leaning upon the arm of a covenant God,—the voice, upraised in prayer, is a voice speaking in the ear of the living God,—the spirit, that is bent in prayer, is bent before the very throne of God. Yes; the humble cottager, when he gathers round him his little flock, and, at the family altar, kneels in his lowly dwelling, is worshipping in heaven,—the very scene, where ten thousand times ten thousand bright and beautiful beings weave the high chorus of enraptured adoration. The wanderer on the waters, whose voice seems drowned amid the din of the tempest, is speaking audibly within the veil, where is cast that “anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast,” by which a universe might hold,

and never know shipwreck. The soldier, who, amid the thunders of the battle-field, or by his lonely watch-fire, breathes forth a prayer indited by the Holy Spirit, his utterance is heard above, far away from the tented field, and the crash of war,—in that tranquil abode, where there can be no strife, nor toil, nor trial,—where the pilgrim rests from all his labours. On the land and on the sea, at home or abroad, in the publicity of business, or in the privacy of retirement, “The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.” Christian ! stay not from the throne of grace because of an *unfavourable frame of mind*. To linger at a distance, because of unfitness and unpreparedness to approach it, is to alter its character from a throne of *grace* to a throne of *merit*. Not for any frame, either good or bad, in the suppliant, does God bow His ear, but for His own mercy’s sake. Oh, yield not, then, to this device of the great enemy ! It is your blessed privilege, to go to Jesus at *all* times,—to go in darkness,—to go in weak faith,—to go when everything says, “stay away,”—to go in the face of opposition,—to hope against hope,—to go in

the consciousness of having walked at a distance,—yes, even to take the hard, the cold, the reluctant heart, and lay it before the Lord.

Is it, then, a time of *trial* with thee, Christian? Take it, whatever it be, simply to thy God, and, casting it upon His tenderness and sympathy, you will find relief. Is it a time of spiritual *darkness* with thee? Then, it is a time of *need*. Take your darkness to the throne of grace, and in “*His light*,” who sitteth upon it, you “shall see light.” Is it a time of *adverse providences*? Then, it is a time of *need*. And, where can you go for guidance, for direction, for counsel, for light upon the pathway, but to the God of all grace? Is it a time of *temporal distress* with thee? Then, it is a time of *need*. Take your temporal cares and necessities to the Lord; for He who is the God of grace is also the God of providence. It is *prayer* that keeps every grace of the spirit in active, holy, and healthy exercise. It is the stream, so to speak, that supplies refreshing vigour and nourishment to all the plants of grace,—it is the sacred channel, through which the Saviour supplies all the *needs* of His pilgrim followers.

Prayer is *your* holy privilege, and your solemn duty. Prayer, for grace to help in your time of need. Prayer, for reviving grace, for quickening, restraining, sanctifying grace. Prayer, to be kept from falling, to be held up in the slippery paths. Prayer, for the lowly mind, for the contrite spirit, for the broken heart, for the soft, and close, and humble walk with God. Despond and despair not, trembling one, because at times thou kneelest at God's footstool, yearning for more grace and peace, and yet art dumb, from the very want of words, to speak thy desires. It is for thy comfort such words as these are sent, "The Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." When language is too weak to express the craving desires of thy heart,—when thoughts arise too big for utterance,—or when, under the pressure of some crushing trial, or the consciousness of sin, thy lips utter not a word,—even then, the Holy Spirit interprets the thoughts, and reads the language of desire. He, to whom "all hearts are open, and from whom no secrets are hid," understands the mind of the Spirit; and thus, the scarcely-breathed sigh,—the silent-heaving, and up-

ward aspiration,—find acceptance with the Hearer and the Answerer of prayer. Let this be the language of your soul :—

“ O merciful God, who hast graciously promised Thy Holy Spirit to them that ask Thee, grant that I may enjoy His blessed influence. May He teach me how to pray, and stir me up to greater earnestness, that, loving Thee above all things, and relying ever upon Thy grace, I may be able to rejoice in the hope of eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

“ My God! is any hour so sweet,
From blush of morn to evening star,
As that which calls me to Thy feet,—
The hour of prayer?

“ Bless'd is the tranquil hour of morn,
And bless'd that hour of solemn eve,
When on the wings of prayer upborne,
The world I leave.

“ Then is my strength by Thee renewed ;
Then are my sins by Thee forgiven ;
Then dost Thou cheer my solitude,
With hope of heaven.

“ No words can tell what sweet relief
There for my every want I find ;
What strength for warfare, balm for grief,—
What peace of mind.

" Hush'd is each doubt, gone every fear ,
 My spirit seems in heaven to stay ;
 And e'en the penitential tear
 Is wiped away.

" Lord ! till I reach that blissful shore,
 No privilege so dear shall be
 As thus my inmost soul to pour
 In prayer to Thee."

ANON.

" Oh ! might we all our lineage prove,
 Give and forgive, do good and love,
 By soft endearments in kind strife,
 Lightening the load of daily life.
 There is much need : for, not as yet
 Are we in shelter or repose ;
 The holy house is still beset
 With leaguer of stern foes ;
 Wild thoughts within, bad men without,
 All evil spirits round about,
 Are banded in unblest device
 To spoil Love's earthly paradise.

" Then draw we nearer day by day,
 Each to his brethren, all to God ;
 Let the world take us as she may,
 We must not change our road ;
 Not wondering, though in grief to find
 The martyr's foe still keep her mind,
 But fix'd to hold Love's banner fast,
 And by submission win at last."

Divine Teaching.

LUKE xii. 12.

“For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.”

1 COR. ii. 10.

“The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”

JOHN xvi. 13.

“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth : for he shall not speak of himself ; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak : and he will shew you things to come.”

2 TIM. iii. 15.

“And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

HEB. iv. 12.

“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

2 PETER i. 19.

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy ; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts.”

PSALM xix. 7, 8.

“The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul : the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart : the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.”

" Leaning on Thee, my Guide, my Friend,
My gracious Saviour, I am bless'd ;
Though weary, Thou dost condescend
To be my rest.

" Leaning on Thee, my soul retires
From earthly thoughts and earthly things :
On Thee concentrates her desires ;
To Thee she clings.

" Leaning on Thee, with childlike faith,
To Thee the future I confide ;
Each step of life's untrodden path
Thy love shall guide.

" Leaning on Thee, I breathe no moan,
Though faint with languor, parch'd with heat ;
Thy will has now become my own,—
That will is sweet.

" Leaning on Thee, 'midst torturing pain,
With patience Thou my soul dost fill ;
Thou whisperest, ' What did I sustain ? '—
Then I am still.

" Leaning on Thee, though faint and weak—
Too weak another voice to hear—
Thy heavenly accents comfort speak,—
' Be of good cheer.'

" Leaning on Thee, no fear alarms ;
Calmly I stand on death's dark brink ;
I feel ' the everlasting arms '—
I cannot sink."

PSALM xxv. 5.

"Lead me in Thy truth, and teach me."



THE Bible is the Christian pilgrim's guide-book. It points out the path he is to follow; it reveals the mountains of difficulty, and the valleys of doubt and fear along which he is to traverse; it tells him of the dangers he has to encounter, and the enemies that lie in ambush to assail and overcome him. It encourages his heart, by directing the eye of faith to Him who has already trodden every step of the wilderness journey, and to the noble band of followers whom He has safely conducted to the heavenly Canaan. It traces man's progress, from the corruptible to the incorruptible,—from the feeble and dishonoured to the mighty and the glorious,—from the companionship of the worm to the presence of God and the enjoyment of celestial intercourse. It gives him the assurance of strength for the journey, and blessing at its

close,—of redemption, begun, carried ward, and completed. Blessed be God time has gone by, when the pages of sacred volume were shut by the tyrant man,—when the light was hidden, which intended should give comfort and peamyrriads. The poorest in our land, can make it his morning and his evening panion,—he can there satisfy the year of his heart, and find a rich and sufficing gracious provision for all his wants. He cling to it in his darkest and saddest time in his hours of trial,—in the day of his and his struggle with inbred corruption with the powers of darkness,—and he bear witness at the close of his experience that “nought has failed him of any thing which the Lord hath promised,” with glowing language, though it be with faint and the faltering voice of a dying bear his testimony in the confession, ‘Word, O God, is Truth.’

But the Bible is a *sealed* book,—it is unmeaning, profitless, without Divine teaching. Our eyes must be opened by a heavenly agency, before we can perceive, much embrace its truths as we ought,—before

can adopt and apply them,—as our *guide* and *stay*, amid the wilderness of *this* world,—our *hope* and *expectation* of life and immortality in the world *that is to come*. Ours must be the prayer of the Psalmist, “Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law.” We must read our Bibles with the prayer to the God of all grace, that He would reveal to us the wisdom, and love, and blessedness contained in the sacred volume,—that He would impress them on our hearts, and enable us to make them “our song in the house of our pilgrimage.” If thus we pray, and read, and look for the Spirit, He will meet us in the Book of God,—He will shine upon the sacred page,—He will testify of Christ to us,—we will find Jesus in the Bible—our Saviour, our God, our Lord, our all in all. Truths will flash in upon our minds we never knew before,—comfort will be derived from promises we had often read with little interest, and, gradually, the volume of Inspiration will become more plain,—in every season of doubt or emergency, we will know where to look for guidance, and strength, and comfort. Christian! is it thus *you* read the Word of God, with the prayer

that God would teach you, that He would unfold the riches of His grace in Christ, that He would open up the wondrous page of revelation to your heart, and give you grace to believe those deeper truths, whose meaning you are now, whilst in the infancy of your being, unable fully to comprehend? We doubt not, you can recall many "wondrous things," already revealed to your soul,—revealed, not by the mere perusal of the words, but by the inspiration and teaching of God's Holy Spirit. You can remember that sweet promise which calmed your troubled heart, and made you erect an Ebenezer in your pathway. Was it not "wondrous" in its power? You can remember how, when the world and the things of the world were drawing you further and further from God,—when your gourd withered in a night,—when, perhaps, some cherished idol was dashed in pieces,—how these words appeared on the sacred page, invested with new and mightier power, "It is I, be not afraid." You can remember when temptation assailed you, or when summer friends deserted you, or when the enemy came in like a flood,—*how* "wondrous" were the disclosures of God's Word,—

how exactly suited to your case,—how comforting to your soul. Not till then, had the verses struck you,—not till then, had the words been invested with living power. You had read them often, but you needed not their comfort,—only when *that* wound was open and bleeding,—only when *that* cross became heavy and painful,—only when *that* grief was sorest and most overwhelming, did you take them to your heart ; and then, impressed by the Spirit of the living God, they were full of peace and comfort, “ immediately there was a great calm.” Believer ! continue to implore that Spirit’s help, and still, “ wondrous ” things will come to you in your hours of need. Still, the longer you live, you will get the promise, when it is required, the comfort, when nothing else can soothe, the assurance, when doubt and disquietude are doing their worst to harass and agitate your soul,—and, onwards still, through all eternity, these “ wondrous ” things will be revealed. You will read in the open volume of God’s law, explanations of difficulties,—the wisdom of appointments,—the love and tenderness of a Father in all your Father’s dealings. Then shall the Divine attributes rise before you,

unsearchable, indeed, and unlimited, but ever unfolding more of their stupendousness and beauty, their grace and harmony. Then shall the mystic figures of prophecy, which here have crossed your path, only as the faint shadows of far off events, take each its allotted place in accomplished plans, decreed and willed by the Everlasting Mind. Then shall redemption throw open before you its untravelled amplitude, and allow of your tracing those marvellous effects, which the Cross, erected on this planet, may possibly produce to all the outskirts of immensity. Then shall the varied occurrences of this life, the dark things and the bright, which chequered your pathway, appear equally necessary, equally merciful; and, as you thus advance in knowledge and in strength, increasing in heavenly wisdom, and tracing more and more of the Divine faithfulness, your heart will beat with a higher pulse of devotion, and your voice send forth a richer chorus of praise. Eternity will be one glorious morning, with the sun ever climbing higher and higher,—one blessed spring time, and yet richer summer,—every plant in full flower, but every flower the bud of a lovelier.

Believer, these joys yet await thee. They may not be far distant. But your journey is not ended, your home is not reached. If, then, you would have comfort by the way,—if you would have courage, and skill, and strength, to surmount the obstacles which may lie in your path—oh, let your daily prayer be :—

“‘Lead me in Thy truth, and teach me.’ Lord,—‘teach me’ that Thou hast loved me, and given Thyself for me,—that Thou hast bought me with Thy blood,—that I am Thine. ‘Teach me’ that Thou art my Wisdom, my Righteousness, my Sanctification, my Redemption, my Help in difficulty, my Refuge in danger, my Ark of Safety across the swelling Jordan, and my All in All throughout eternity. ‘Teach me’ that Thy Spirit is my Comforter, my Counsellor, my Guide. ‘Teach me’ that the promises of Thy Word are mine,—its precepts, and testimonies, and statutes, all mine,—its entreaties, and warnings, and preservatives, all mine,—mine by the free gift of the Father,—mine by the purchase of the blood of God’s dear Son,—mine by the teaching of the Holy Spirit the Comforter,—mine

by a perpetual covenant, never to be violated or forgotten,—mine *whereby* to live, and mine *wherein* to die.”

“ There are those who sigh that no fond heart is theirs ;
None loves them best. Oh, vain and selfish sigh !
Out of the bosom of His love He spares—
The Father spares the Son, for thee to die.
For thee He died. For thee He lives again ;
O'er thee He watches in His boundless reign.”

KEBLE.

“ Lord, many times I am aweary quite
Of mine own self, my sin, my vanity ;
Yet be not Thou, or I am lost outright,
Weary of me.

“ And hate against myself I often bear,
And enter with myself in fierce debate ;
Take Thou my part against myself, nor share
In that just hate.

“ Best friends might loathe us, if what things perverse
We know of our own selves, they also knew ;
Lord, Holy One ! if Thou, who knowest worse,
Should loathe us too !”

R. C. TRENCH.

Fidelity.

MATT. x. 22.

"And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake ; but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."

1 COR. xv. 58.

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

HEB. iii. 14.

"For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end."

HEB. x. 23, 35.

"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering ; (for he is faithful that promised.) Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward."

REV. ii. 7, 11, 17, 26-28.

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches ; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches ; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches ; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations : and he shall rule them with a rod of iron ; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers : even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star."

" Up, fainting soul, arise and sing ;
Mount, but be sober on the wing,—
Mount up, for heaven is won by prayer,
Be sober, for thou art not there ;
Till death thy weary spirit free,
Thy God hath said, 'Tis good for thee
To walk by faith, and not by sight ;
Take it on trust a little while ;
Soon shalt thou read the mystery right
In the full sunshine of His smile.

" Or if thou yet more knowledge crave,
Ask thine own heart, that willing slave
To all that works thee woe or harm :
Shouldst thou not need some mighty charm
To win thee to thy Saviour's side,
Though He had deign'd with thee to bide ?
The Spirit must stir the darkling deep,
The Dove must settle on the cross,
Else we should all sin on or sleep
With Christ in sight, turning our gain to loss."

KENT.

REV. ii. 10.

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."



THE pathway to heaven is not to all alike. There are those who become speedily ripe for glory,—those who reach the close of their journey, ere, to human appearance, it has been well begun; whilst others have to bear the burden and heat of the day, to toil onwards for many stages, and to see the shadows of the evening slowly gathering in upon their weary footsteps. But to all, the words are addressed, "Be thou faithful unto death,"—"be faithful, even should thy life be perilled,—be faithful till the hour of thy departure comes." Life is not always to be reckoned by the number of its days; it is possible for the longest to be really briefer than the shortest, for—

"We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths;
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.
We should count time by heart-throbs. He most lives
Who thinks most feels the noblest, acts the best."

Yet, as we know not how long the journey may be, we should remember that we are called to be "faithful unto death." It is time that tries a man's love to the Saviour,—time, with its changes and sorrows, its varying labours and temptations. It is the long dark night that puts to the test the watchful servant, and the winds and storms that beat upon him. It is not the fierce onset that tries the soldier, it is the march through the burning sands,—it is passive courage and endurance the soldier requires. And so, it is the passive virtues the Christian has to exercise to the close of life that try his fidelity. Not far has he journeyed, when he finds, that the road to Canaan is through an enemy's country, that a wilderness intervenes, in which there is many a brier and many a thorn, and that his courage and endurance will be severely tested. Foes lie in wait, to tempt him from his allegiance, at every turn in his path. Wherever he is,—in the mart of commerce,—when he toils in the workshop,—when he returns to his home,—when he rests on his bed,—in the bustle of the day, and in the silence of the night,—in the bosom of his family,—in society,—alone,—in the

fields,—in the church,—in his secret retirement,—he can never elude the enemy,—he carries the foe in his own breast, the conflict ceases not,—there is no intermission of time,—no season of rest,—there are no truces sounded,—no flag is ever unfurled that can be trusted; if we halt, it is at our peril; if we pause, it is to be wounded; if we temporise, it is to prove ourselves unfaithful. It is a conflict “*until death;*” *till the end*, it is true, “we wrestle.” The oldest Christian cannot relax his vigilance,—cannot lay aside his weapons, if he would be a “faithful soldier of Christ Jesus.” Faith must be in constant exercise. He must “put on the whole armour of God:”—righteousness as his breastplate, the hope of salvation as his helmet, the sword of the Spirit, bright and shining,—keeping ever near his Captain,—looking ever to Him, relying ever on His guidance, and following ever His footsteps. Oh! it is not so easy to remain “faithful,” surrounded as we here are by countless enticements to infidelity. It *is* easy, to live the lives of some Christians,—easy, to wander languidly over the soft and flowery meadow,—easy, to float dreamily down the smooth and placid stream of time;

but, not easy, to climb the rough and craggy cliff,—not easy, to stem the tempestuous billows, and resist the downward current. And this is what the faithful Christian *has* to do. He has to be *in* the world, yet not *of* the world; he has to come out of it,—not by monastic seclusion, but by mastering its temptations,—to be diligent in its duties, yet not absorbed by them,—appreciating its innocent delights, yet not ensnared by them,—gazing upon its attractions, and yet rising superior to them. If he would be “faithful,” he must live surrounded by objects which appeal to the sight, and, yet “endure as seeing Him who is invisible.” He must pray, often seeing no answer to prayer, and still pray on,—he must war in this warfare, finding fresh foes continually rising up, and still war on,—harassed with doubts and fears, he must yet walk on in darkness, though he see no light, staying himself daily upon his God.

Christian! to be *thus* faithful is no easy task. It is not in your own might that you will continue steadfast. Like the great apostle, you must look for your “sufficiency” in God. See what Divine strength enabled *him* to achieve! “He kept the faith” at Antioch,

even when the infatuated crowd attempted to drown his voice with their clamour, and "interrupted him, contradicting and blaspheming." He "kept the faith" at Iconium, when the "envious Jews stirred up the people to stone him." He "kept the faith" at Lystra, when the fate of Stephen became almost his, and he was dragged, wounded and bleeding, outside the ramparts of the town, and left there to languish, and, for aught they cared, to die. He "kept the faith" against his erring brother Peter, and "withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed." He "kept the faith" when "shamefully treated at Philippi," and made the dungeon echo back the praises of his God. He "kept the faith" in Thessalonica, when "lewd fellows of the baser sort accused him falsely of sedition." He "kept the faith" at Athens, when, to the world's sages, he preached of Him whom they ignorantly worshipped as "the Unknown God." He "kept the faith" at Corinth, when compelled to abandon that hardened and obdurate city, and to shake off the very dust from his garment, as a testimony against it. He "kept the faith" at Ephesus, when he pointed his hearers, not to Diana,

but to Jesus Christ, as their only Saviour. He "kept the faith" in Jerusalem, when stoned by the enraged and agitated mob,—when stretched upon the torturing rack and bound with iron fetters. He "kept the faith" in Cesarea, before the trembling, conscience-stricken Felix, when he "reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." He "kept the faith" before Agrippa, and, by his earnestness compelled the king to say, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian;" and, even in the closing hours of life,—when the last storm was gathering over his head,—when lying in the dark and dismal Roman cell,—he wrote these triumphant words, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day."

"Look in and see Christ's chosen saint
In triumph wear his Christ-like chain;
No fear lest he should swerve or faint—
His life is Christ, his death is gain."

Christian! the same strength to continue faithful is promised *you*,—for, to every true

believer the assurance is given, that if they abide steadfast by the cross, they shall fear no evil. The conflict, in which they are to engage, is arduous and incessant, but they are not left without encouragement. They have armour of proof,—they have a mighty Champion,—victory is ensured to the brave. Others have stood on the same battle-field,—they have contended with the same foes,—and, having continued “faithful unto death,” they now enjoy their triumph. Not one faithful warrior ever perished,—none who ever enlisted beneath the Saviour’s banner ever fell upon the field, for, upon that banner there is written, in unfading characters, “No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper.” Our foes are not mightier than the foes *they* mastered who are now in glory ; but our strength is still the same,—they overcame by the same blood of the covenant,—they triumphed through the same Lord. Let us, then, enter the lists with the enemy, fearless,—confiding in Him who has all power in heaven and in earth. Christians ! sheath not the sword, and it shall never be wrested from you,—lay not down the shield, and no fiery dart shall ever penetrate it,—face the

foe, and he shall never trample you down or drive you back. Listen to your Captain,—how He animates you onward, “Be faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” Remember! here is the time of the enemy, eternity is the time of the conqueror,—here is the time of the cross, eternity is the time of the crown,—here is the time of the sword, eternity is the time of the palm,—here is the time of the tempest, eternity is the time of peace. Amid your daily struggles,—your fightings within and fears without,—in the dark hour of sorrow,—in the cheerless night of sickness,—in the stern conflict with the world, the flesh, and the devil,—let the eye of faith gaze on the incorruptible crown, the golden harp, and the tree of life,—above all, contemplate the blood-stained banner of the Cross which floats over you, and, as you think of *its* victories, how your glorious Leader once spoiled principalities and powers, triumphing over them in it, and how prophets and apostles, martyrs and saints, the young, the aged, and the dying, have found Him true and faithful,—then “be up and doing, quit you like men, abide steadfast by the cross as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.”

Lift up thine eyes, O Christian, and see thy day of glory beginning to dawn. For a season, thou must remain here ; but, yet a little while, and the helmet shall be exchanged for the crown of glory, the sword for the palm of victory, and death shall strip you of your armour, whilst angels throw around you the bright robes of triumph. Never forget the banner under which you serve,—never forget that life is the scene of perpetual warfare. Here, children of God ! here you are, and must continue warriors, on high you will be conquerors,—here you stand upon the battle-plain, on high you will share the honours of victory,—here you struggle for a prize, on high you will receive it ; and, if at any time your spirits seem to flag in the midst of the strife, and the conflict,—if, through manifold temptations, your hearts begin to grow cold in the cause and service of your Lord,—then, call to mind your Saviour’s animating words, “ Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” Christian ! “ be not weary in well-doing, for in due season you shall reap if you faint not.” Toil on, patiently and manfully, in the Master’s work,—do battle with evil, both within and without. Be gain-

ing daily some new victory over sin. I
yourself. Be a willing cross-bearer for
Saviour's sake, and, then, the long, long
will come,—rest, in heaven, from sin
sorrow, from conflict and temptation.
ticipate that rest, and, let the thought
nerve you for your daily struggle, and stir
up to fight the battle, to which the Cap
of your salvation has called you. “Then
the border land, to you, as to the pilgrim
old, angel voices will come from the heav
city,—the air of the country of Beulah
be sweet and pleasant, and, as you near
home, its glories will expand to your won
ing heart. With Hopeful in the ‘Pilgr
Progress,’ look up at the Celestial Gate,
see men in bright raiment ready to rec
you,—see, the shining crown prepared, w
is to grace thy brow, and the golden
ready, from whose chords thou art to b
the melody of praise, and the seat awa
thee, which thou art to occupy as ete
ages roll on.”

Christian! be patient,—be faithful “
the coming of thy Lord”; let thy soul an
itself on the unshaken Rock of the Di
veracity. It is not life, and it is not de

which shall be able to separate thee from thy Redeemer,—all shall be overcome. The triple band of the world, the flesh, and the devil, shall be vanquished in the might of the Triune God ; and, when your spirit has departed for the realms of everlasting recompence, angel spirits will chaunt the anthem over your bier, “ Rest, warrior, rest,” and surviving relatives take comfort in the thought, “ He overcame the world, and the victory was by *faith*.” Then, all will be peace,—no tempest will beat upon you there, no storms will disturb you there, no foe will assail you there. The tear will be dried, the throbbing heart will be hushed, and the harp, which has often sounded no note but when fitfully swept by the passing breeze, shall be strung for the rich and sweet music of the skies. Then will you take your place triumphant upon the summit of Mount Zion,—amid that countless army of the Faithful, who have retired for ever from the field of conflict, where every man has been a soldier, every soldier a hero, and every hero a conqueror. With them, you will repose beneath the fig-tree, and enjoy the fruits of peace ; and those fruits will be all the sweeter, by the contrast of the

perils through which you have passed on the way. In the enjoyment of victory, you will think of the conflict,—while waving the palm, you will think of the sword,—while there in peace and happiness, you will think of the danger and the peril through which you pressed to reach that blessed world of safety. Believer ! be this your prayer :—

“O God ! enable me, by Thy grace, to fight the good fight,—to continue faithful unto death, that I may at length receive the crown of life.”

“ Lay down the shield, and quit the sword,
For now thy work is done ;
And swiftly towards the glowing east
Ascends the rising sun.
Angelic guards wait with the day
Thy crown of light to bring ;
‘O grave, where is thy victory ?
O death, where is thy sting ?’

“ Bravely hast thou upheld the shield
The path of conquest trod ;
And follow’d in the battle-field
The banner of thy God.
The hour of rest approaches nigh,
And waiting heralds sing,
‘O grave, where is thy victory ?
O death, where is thy sting.’

"They come, they come, and high in air
Is borne the Victor's wreath,
Who overthrew, in glorious war,
The world, the grave, and death.
There, there they wait to welcome thee,
And high their triumphs ring,
'O grave, where is thy victory?
O death, where is thy sting?'"



God's Presence.

Ps. xvi. 11.

"Thou wilt shew me the path of life : in thy presence is fulness of joy ; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."

Ps. li. 12.

"Cast me not away from thy presence ; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me."

Ps. cxl. 13.

"Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name ; the upright shall dwell in thy presence."

" I need Thy *presence* every passing hour :
What, but Thy grace, can foil the tempter's power ?
Who, like Thyself, my guide and stay can be ?
Through cloud and sunshine, O abide with me !

" I'll fear no foe with Thee at hand to bless ;
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting ? where, grave, thy victory ?
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.

" Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes ;
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies.
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows
flee !
In life, in death, dear Lord, abide with me."

H. L. LYTE.

EXOD. xxxiii. 14.

“And He said, My presence shall go with thee.”



HE children of Israel had grievously sinned,—the cloudy pillar had disappeared,—the anger of the Lord was kindled, and the courage of Moses failed. Earnestly he pleaded in behalf of the erring people, and at length he prevailed. The Lord assured His servant, that His gracious presence should still accompany him, in leading Israel to Canaan, the promised rest.

God's presence! Reader! Reflect on this high honour. That He who reigns supreme amid the hosts of heaven,—who is King of kings and Lord of lords, should condescend to become the friend,—the companion of sinful, erring man. Was ever pilgrim more honoured? ever traveller in better company? Yet God *has* ever been, and ever *will* be, the companion of them that fear Him. Enoch

walked with God. Abram was addressed in these words—"Walk before Me, and be thou perfect." Christian! hast *thou* not also realised the fulfilment of the gracious promise? "Yes," methinks I hear you say, "it has been the mainstay,—the very life of my faith and trust, in the hour of trial; it has enabled me to lift up my head on high, and to exclaim, even from the deep waters, "Yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." To the true believer, there is no promise so precious and encouraging,—it nerves him for conflict,—fills him with peace, and animates him with hope. With God by his side, what enemy need he fear? what path refuse to enter? Is he stript of worldly prosperity? He has *One* who can a thousand-fold make up for the loss. Is he called to resign the loved and the cherished, and to pass through the troubled waters of affliction? "I am still with thee," calms the anguish of his soul, and is as balm to the wounded spirit. Whatever else may be taken from him, he knows that if "*he keep near to God*, God will keep near to him;" that, amid flame and flood, amid storm and calm, in pain and health, in peril and safety, "the eternal God

will be *his* refuge, and underneath the everlasting arms."

Reader! do *you* sometimes feel that God is not near to *you*,—that your confidence, your faith, your strength have failed you? Ah! may not this be the reason? You have wandered from God,—His presence is near, but you perceive it not. The world,—its joys, and pleasures, and cares, have come between, and darkness is spreading, all around and within you. Oh! haste thee to thy Father and thy God; away from these passing vanities, and, *once more*, He will take thee by the hand, and lift up upon thee the light of His countenance. Let your *past* experience of "the joy of His presence," constrain you to "count all things else but loss,"—that you may have the fulfilment, the realisation of this sweet promise. For, if ever you have truly known what it is to have "God by your side," then you know how precious, how delightful is the companionship. It can make the cottage bright and warm; it can sweeten the hard crust, and make even a cup of water blessed; it can inspire the soul with peace and triumph, in the dark night-season of sorrow; and breathe sweet music over the scene of sadness and of

gloom. Has it not, in times past, hushed the tempestuous billows, with the gentle command, "Peace, be still"? Has it not filled the dungeon with the voice of praise, and made the inner prison re-echo with the songs of joy? Has it not enabled many a tried believer to say—

" Let good or ill befall,
It must be good for me ;
Secure of having Thee in *all*,
Of having *all* in Thee."

Christian ! be it yours to "walk with God," strive to behold Him, by faith, amid your joys and sorrows,—in the family, and in the world,—in the secrecy of the closet, and in the daily walks of life. See Him, as He fills your cup and makes it run over. See Him, as He dashes it from your lips, not in anger, but to draw you to Himself. See Him, in the smiles and love, of the unbroken family circle, and in the sorrow and sadness which you *must* feel, as you gaze on the empty chair, or the picture on the wall. See Him, leading thee onward, step by step, never failing nor forsaking thee, but "faithful unto all His promises." Let this be the language of thy soul :—

- " What though the world deceitful prove,
And earthly friends and joys remove,
With patient, uncomplaining love
Still would I cling to Thee !
- " Oft, when I seem to tread alone
Some barren waste, with thorns o'ergrown,
Thy voice of love, in tend'rest tone,
Whispers, ' Still cling to me ! ' "
-

- " Now that the sun is gleaming bright,
Implore we, bending low,
That He, the uncreated Light,
May guide us as we go.
- " No sinful word, nor deed of wrong,
Nor thoughts that idly rove ;
But simple truth be on our tongue,
And in our hearts be love.
- " And while the hours in order flow,
O Christ, securely fence
Our gates, beleaguer'd by the foe—
The gate of every sense.
- " And grant that to Thine honour, Lord,
Our daily toil may tend,
That we begin it at Thy word,
And in Thy favour end."
- Translation of an old Mediæval Hymn.*



Rest.

PSALM CXVI. 7.

“Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.”

PSALM CXXXII. 14.

“This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it.”

ISA. xiv. 3.

“And it shall come to pass . . . that the Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve.”

MATT. xi. 28, 29.

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”

HEB. iv. 9-11.

“There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.”

“ Let me go ! let me go ! for the day is breaking,
The skies have a streak of orient light ;
The shadow of darkness the earth is forsaking,
And the sunbeams are chasing the mists of the night !

“ Let me go ! let me go ! for I may not tarry,
Hinder me not ; for my home is there,
Where angels are waiting my spirit to carry,
And the pure, white raiment is ready to wear !

“ Let me go ! let me go ! for the purple dawning
Is mantling the dull, dark tomb of Time ;
And there stealeth the rays of a blissful morning,
That blushes and burns in a deathless clime !

“ I have done with sin, I have done with sorrow ;
I fly to the spotless realms of light,
Where the day that is breaking shall have no morrow,
And the sun that is rising, shall have no night ! ”

EXOD. xxxiii. 14.
"I will give thee *rest*."



TRUE *rest* is only found in the presence, the favour, and the love of God. Apart from Him, the soul is like the troubled sea,—it is driven to and fro with perplexing doubts and fears. Only in the consciousness of His "presence," is there security, peace, rest. So Moses knew and felt. The "shechinah," the visible symbol of the Divine presence, had been withdrawn,—there was no longer the assurance of guidance and protection. But, along with the promise of His "presence," God also vouchsafed the promise of "rest."

Thus was the leader of Israel strengthened and encouraged,—He trusted God, and verily he was not put to confusion. In the depths of his soul, there was always a consciousness that God was with him,—that he had a Friend ever near,—a Companion in the jour-

ney of life,—a Counsellor, in whom in every difficulty he could confide, and to whom he could reveal every anxiety, and doubt, and fear. And, when he reached the end of his pilgrimage, the promise was fully realised. When near the borders of the promised land, he received the Divine mandate, to ascend and survey, from Pisgah's summit, the earthly inheritance of Israel. We can easily picture to the mind, the calm demeanour of this aged servant of the Lord, as, obedient to the summons, he commenced his last earthly journey. With quiet, unshaken confidence in the God who had led him hitherto, he prepared to resign his spirit into His hands. Reader! mark the fulfilment of the promise, "I will give thee rest." See, the venerable patriarch, "whose eye was not dim, and whose natural force was not abated," beholding with admiring eye "the land of Gilead, unto Dan, and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea," with the blue waters of the Mediterranean, glittering in the distant sunbeams, "and the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm-trees, unto Zoar." He medi-

tates, and then exclaims, "Thy presence, O God, has indeed gone with me. Thy promise has been fulfilled. Thou art true and faithful. Here, then, is the land where my fathers sojourned,—the land, for the gaining of which, I led the people across the waters of the Red Sea,—when Jehovah made bright the shining of His glorious arm,—the land, of which He told me it was a good land and large, flowing with milk and honey, full of fertility and beauty,—the land, where the hosts whom I have conducted, are destined to dwell in magnificence and might, beneath the banner of the Lord." And, oh! what peace, what rest of soul he enjoys in the prospect of the future,—how his eye kindles, as the thought of the glorious Antetype,—the Heavenly Canaan,—rises within him, and he feels that he shall shortly and assuredly be there! And how peacefully he bows his head and dies!

Believer, the promise of "*rest*" is also thine,—rest, in the assurance of God's favour *here*, and rest, in the full enjoyment of heaven hereafter. Think not, because toil and trial, danger and difficulty are before thee, that the promise will fail. Remember, amid *out-*

ward ills there may be *inward* quiet. When the surface of the lake is ruffled by the rough wind, far down in its depths there is perfect calm. Even so in thy spirit, when on *its* surface there is a tossing to and fro, deep down in its secret chambers there is the "peace" of God,—the rest of a forgiven soul,—the quiet of a loved, confiding child. Judge not, that all are at rest who meet you with gleaming eye, and joyous countenance, and merry laugh. Ah! no, *their* soul "knoweth its own bitterness." Could you read the pages of their hearts, you would find the record of many woes,—secret, painful, agonising griefs, known only to themselves,—unforgiven sins, distracting fears, perplexing doubts, which ever and anon, amid the ceaseless whirl of gaiety, send an arrow through the soul. The "rest" which is found in the "presence" of God, *alone* can be said to have any reality. Then, amid the sorest trials and heaviest bereavements,—amid pain and sickness,—amid the wildest, the fiercest gusts of outward fortune,—it is no strange thing, to mark the continuance of a holy, of an almost unearthly peace. On the cheek wasted by disease, or on the pale and pain-contracted

brow, or on the Christian pilgrim, just standing on the brink of Jordan's stream, has not seldom been witnessed the calmness of a heavenly "rest;" and, from lips quivering with anguish,—yea, convulsed in the throes of death, have fallen words of meek resignation, and even joyful hope, that told, how the peace of the spirit, can triumph over all outward pain.

"No smile is like the smile of death,
When, all good musings past,
Rise, wafted with the parting breath,
The sweetest thought, the last."

And, O believer! think of the *future* fulfilment of this sweet promise,—when the battle of life will be ended, the conflict over, the stormy ocean crossed, the haven of eternal repose at last entered,—“there *remaineth* a rest for the people of God.” Yes! there *is* a “rest” in heaven;—not the rest of inactivity,—not the indolence of a Pagan elysium, or a Mahometan paradise; but the *quiet* of a soul reposing on its God, and delighting ever in His service. Labour is rest to the loving spirit,—congenial work is not toil; and in heaven, though the redeemed “rest *not* day nor night,” yet theirs is a peace-

ful, congenial activity. The work, which on earth gave rise to the feeling of effort, then passes into pleasure ; and the soul's repose is in *goodness*,—a goodness, which has become a very necessity, and in which, holy thoughts and works are as devoid of effort as song to a bird, or fragrance to the summer flower. There is endless repose, yet endless activity, —unwearied, yet delightful employment in the service of God. No more shall the redeemed grieve and mourn,—no more shall tears of sorrow and disappointment fall, or the heart be surcharged with affliction and distress. The anxious troubles and the bitter cares of life are never felt in the realms of glory ; for *there*, no seductive pleasure misleads,—no ambition unduly excites,—no carking thoughts fetter and cramp the soul.

Believer ! anticipate that “rest.” But a few more rolling suns,—a few more painful struggles,—a few more “swings of Time's pendulum,” and the world's curfew-bell will toll, announcing that the Sabbath of eternity has come. Then will you enjoy that “rest,” which even an angel's voice could not portray, and be with Him, who has been the source of all your earthly happiness,—Him,

by whose sorrow you were made to rejoice,—Him, by whose grace your nature was renewed,—Him, who was your advocate when you offended,—who blessed you all your life long,—who communicated to you His Holy Spirit,—who shewed towards you a patience which nothing could exhaust, a love which passeth understanding,—who, though you outraged, and dishonoured, and forgot, and turned away from Him, would never turn away from you, till He had conducted you in safety to His everlasting kingdom.

Believer! fear not the passage to that “rest.” The apostle was willing to brave the swellings of Jordan, because of the beauty of the land that lies beyond it. “I have a *desire*,” he says, “to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.” He was ready to pass through the fiery ordeal, because conscious of the truth, that the skirts of his garment only should be injured, while the soul, safe as in the citadel of God, should only shine with greater lustre, rising on imperishable pinions, and resting not, till it should soar and sing with the seraphim beside the throne.

Journey on then, child of God, grasping

firmly the promise, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest."

Lo! the towers of the celestial city are already gilding the distant horizon; yet a little while, and you shall be standing at the gate, presenting your credentials for admission.

Be calm in the contemplation of your departure; the hour of death intervenes between the scenes of time and the immortal realms of celestial joy. It is like the stream which Moses beheld before him, dividing the wilderness from the promised land. Look upon it, O believer! as it rolls in rapid floods, bearing upon its waves the wrecks and ruins of mortality. Its waters, perhaps, are chilling, and, it may be, overflowing its banks, as if to inspire greater terror at its approach. But the High Priest of the Gospel is there,—the ark of the covenant is there,—and He, holding that ark, pronounces, "Fear not, when thou passest through the waters I will be with thee," &c.

"Rise, my soul, and stretch thy wing,
Thy better portion trace,
Rise from transitory things
Towards heaven, thy native place."

God of all grace, by whose good hand upon
 I have hitherto been guided in my pil-
 nage, hold Thou me up, and so I shall be
 . Suffer me no more to wander from Thy
 s, or to grow weary in keeping Thy com-
 andments. Make me watchful against
 ptation, strong in faith, diligent in duty,
 ient in trial, and fervent in prayer. And,
 Thine own good time, may I be permitted
 enter into that rest which remaineth for
 people of God."

"Only, O Lord, in Thy dear love,
 Fit us for perfect rest above ;
 And help us, this and every day,
 To live more nearly as we pray."

" 'Spirit, leave thy house of clay ;
 Ling'ring dust, resign thy breath ;
 Spirit, cast thy chains away ;
 Dust, be thou dissolved in death :'
 Thus th' Almighty Saviour speaks,
 While the faithful Christian dies ;
 Thus the bonds of life He breaks,
 And the ransom'd captive flies.

" 'Prisoner, long detain'd below ;
 Prisoner, now with freedom blest ;
 Welcome, from a world of woe ;
 Welcome, to a land of rest :'

Thus the choir of angels sing,
 As they bear the soul on high ;
 While, with hallelujahs ring
 All the region of the sky.

" Grave, the guardian of our dust ;
 Grave, the treasury of the skies ;
 Every atom of thy dust
 Rests in hope again to rise.
 Hark ! the judgment-trumpet calls,—
 ' Soul, rebuild thy house of clay ;
 Immortality, thy walls,
 And, eternity, thy day.' "

MONTGOMERY

" One sweetly solemn thought
 Comes to me o'er and o'er ;
 I'm *nearer* my home to-day
 Than I've ever been before !
Nearer my Father's house,
 Where the many mansions be ;
Nearer the great white throne,
Nearer the jasper sea !
Nearer the bound of life,
 Where I lay my burden down ;
Nearer leaving my cross !
Nearer wearing my crown ! "

THE END.

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